

HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS



PART II.
—ISAIAH—
(CH. I—XXXIX)

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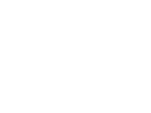
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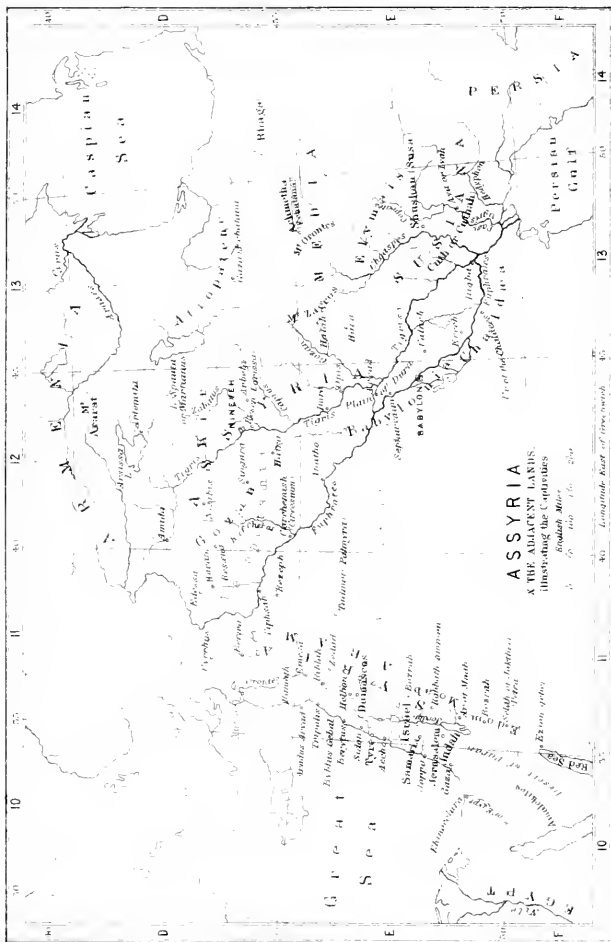
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HOW TO READ ISAIAH.



HOW TO READ ISAIAH

BEING THE

PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH

(CH. I.-XXXIX.)

ARRANGED IN ORDER OF TIME AND SUBJECT,

WITH EXPLANATIONS AND GLOSSARY

(PART II. OF "HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS.")

BY THE

REV. BUCHANAN BLAKE, B.D.,

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE aim of this manual is to place within the reach of the people at large, some of the chief results of modern investigations into the life and times of the great prophet Isaiah. While special qualifications are necessary for the following out of the processes through which critics work their way, all may understand results, and should know them. This, at least, in a broad general view : for absolute certainty or agreement as to all details of an age so long gone by can never be expected, and, perhaps, might not be of any particular value if it were possible. For the right reading of Scripture, some simple and easily followed arrangement of the prophecies should be carried out. In presenting the Second Edition of "How to read Isaiah" to the public, it is felt that others feel this need as much as the author did. And he would take this opportunity of saying that this fact, along with the pleasure and profit he himself derived from such a study, has led him to apply the same principles and adopt the same method of treatment in regard to the other prophetic books of Scripture as he has followed here. In accordance with this plan, this volume becomes the second part of "How to read the Prophets."

This is not a commentary. It is rather a historical representation of the teaching and environment of a great prophet, very much in the words of his own choosing, or in the literature of his own time and country. Hence we place at the beginning the Text of Scripture in an unbroken continuity, save so far as paragraph headings are concerned. Explanations and references are given in a Glossary at the end ; while in the second division is found a historical account of the circumstances in which he

spoke, and of what he said. The chapter and verse divisions, which so often give a mechanical appearance to Scripture, have been omitted, and thus an effort has been made to set forth the Text in the natural form of delivery. The aim is to allow the prophet to speak directly to us now, as he once spoke to his own people. By getting into closer touch with the living prophet, the reader is brought into closer fellowship with the living God, who spoke to and through him. In this way the devotional reading of Scripture will be aided : and this is really our great aim. And just as the power to bring sweetest music out of an instrument depends not only upon the instrument, but also upon the performer, so the power to use Scripture aright, even with all present day aids, depends on the reader being divinely influenced by that same Holy Spirit by whom in the olden time men from God were moved to speak. The more we are in touch with the inspiring Spirit, the more will we understand the inspired Word. A firm persuasion, on our part, that the principles of truth and righteousness, once borne witness to by Isaiah, and enshrined in his prophecies, are eternal in character and universal in application, will bid us learn to apply them to our own life, as we read how in the former time they were so applied by him. In regard to the Text, it is a matter of deep regret that the Revised Version could not have been used throughout. Some of the changes made in it have not helped the meaning, while not unfrequently the translation that most aptly brings it out is found in the margin. In some places the Hebrew Text is very uncertain, and emendations are numerous. Hence we could not content ourselves with the Authorised Version ; and the placing of certain passages in poetic form rendered changes absolutely necessary. To get some clear teaching from every passage must be our first concern, that so we may know "what the Lord saith."

The Book of the Prophecies of Isaiah, as now extant, contains prophecies by several prophets, even as the Book of Psalms contains Psalms by many psalmists, and the Book of

the Law additions by many writers. But, in all three cases, the collection rightly and naturally receives the name of the first and most important contributor, Moses, David, Isaiah. A master-mind and true originator in each case receives deservedly the credit for the whole. The grand personality of Isaiah, as a formative master-mind, with a distinctive prophetic programme, and clear views about Jehovah in His character, and relation, both to Judah, and the nations, requires full appreciation. The messages or declarations of the Divine Purpose, as originally delivered, must be studied in the order and circumstances of their delivery. The facts must here speak for themselves : and to let this be done the more easily, portions from the historical books have been inserted in their appropriate places. Whether we have the prophecies in the exact form in which Isaiah, in his old age, edited them, can never be determined. Certainly they are not arranged in the order of delivery. Probably there are additions by some of his prophetic successors, and editorial re-arrangements. It must be borne in mind that a prophecy was essentially and primarily a spoken message : that it was only written down from memory or dictation at a later period ; while, also, as such writing was on skins or parchments of great value, shorter prophecies might be put in to fill up spaces at the end of longer ones. In this way prophecies not at all connected in subject-matter might stand together, and not be separated in an uncritical age. Modern Assyrian and Egyptian Inscriptions have helped here greatly, by affording the information necessary for a correct chronological order. It has also to be remembered that ancient editors had a far greater measure of liberty in dealing with an author's writings than we now permit. They worked in materials lying to hand, according as their own view of the subject-matter suggested. Thus, even in the earlier chapters of Isaiah, there are portions that from style and point of view seem to have had a different authorship : passages like the triumph-song over Babylon, and those dealing with some

signal divine interposition (xxiv.-xxvii.) are of a later date than Isaiah. And manifestly we have a new book beginning with the fortieth chapter, with new authors, new circumstances, and new hopes. But, as this completes the prophetic programme of Isaiah, in narrating the release of the Remnant, it has come down alongside his genuine writings. We have all been trained to interpret Scripture by the traditional views of the Rabbis, largely followed uncritically as these were by early Christian Divines. The exclusive national ideas of the Rabbis, and the eager Messianic Exegesis of their followers have not unfrequently cast the literal meaning into the background. This literal meaning, in all its fulness, must be brought again into the foreground. What has to be done, first of all, is to read Isaiah in the light of his own times, and though this is not easy, it is obligatory on all. When this has been done, we may then advance under the guidance of New Testament Revelation, and find in the prophetic hopes a better day than the prophets could understand, even that day that Abraham desired to see, and rejoiced, a day of salvation "concerning which the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you."

Note.—The names of persons and places, printed in black type in the text, are referred to in the Glossary in the order in which they occur.

DIVISION I.

THE TEXT OF SCRIPTURE.

PART I.

THE HISTORICAL CONDITIONS OF ISAIAH'S MINISTRY.

ITS DURATION (742-701 B.C.).

The Kings concerned.

The Vision of **Isaiah**, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning **Judah** and **Jerusalem**, in the days of **Uzziah**, **Jotham**, **Ahaz**, and **Hezekiah**, kings of Judah.

(Isa. ch. i. 1.)

The Reign of Uzziah (810-742 B.C.).

Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah. He built **Eloth**, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers. Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah did. He sought God in the days of **Zechariah**, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper.

And he went forth, and warred against the **Philistines**, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines. And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in **Gur-Baal**, and the **Mehunims**. The **Ammonites** also gave gifts to Uzziah. And his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he became exceeding strong. Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them. Also he built towers in the wilderness, and hewed out many cisterns; for he had much cattle, both in the **lowland** and on the table land, husbandmen, and vine dressers in the hills, and in the fruitful fields: for he loved agriculture.

Moreover, Uzziah had an host of fighting men that went out to war in troops, according to the number of their reckoning, as made by Jeiel the scribe, and Maaseiah the officer under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains. The whole number of the heads of fathers' houses of the mighty men of valour, were two thousand and six hundred. And under them was an army three hundred and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power to help the king against the enemy. And Uzziah prepared for them, throughout all the host, shields, and spears, and helmets, and coats of mail, and bows, and slings for stones. And he made in Jerusalem engines of war designed by ingenious men, to be on the towers, and on the outworks, to shoot arrows and large stones with.

(2 Chron. xxvi. 1-14.)

Uzziah's Sin and Fall (758 B.C.). Jotham Regent (758-742 B.C.).

And his name spread far and wide : for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, and brought about his destruction. For he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord, to burn incense upon the altar of incense : but Azariah, the priest, went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, that were valiant men : and they withstood Uzziah, the king, and said unto him : "It is not for thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated, to burn incense ! Go out of the Holy Place : for thou hast trespassed. This shall not bring honour to thee from the Lord God !"

Then Uzziah was wroth, and held a censer in his hand to burn incense. But while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests of the Lord, beside the altar of incense. Then Azariah the High Priest, and all the priests looked upon him, and behold ! he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out thence. Yea, he himself hasted also to go out, because the Lord had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a leprosy-house, being a leper : for he was cut off from the House of the Lord. And Jotham his son was Regent, ruling the people of the land.

Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write. So Uzziah slept with his fathers : and they buried him with his fathers in the field of burial, which belonged to the kings : for they

said "He is a leper." And Jotham his son reigned in his stead. (2 Chron. xxvi. 15-23.)

Jotham's Reign (742-736 B.C.).

Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became regent, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok. And he did that, which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah did: (howbeit he entered not into the Temple of the Lord). But the people still acted corruptly.* He built the high gate of the House of the Lord, and on the wall of **Ophel** he built much. Moreover, he built towns on the hills of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers.

He fought also with the kings of the Ammonites, and defeated them: and the children of Ammon gave him the same year an hundred talents of silver, and ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. So much did the children of Ammon pay unto him both the second year and the third.

So Jotham became strong, because he ordered his ways before the Lord, his God.

Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars, and his ways, lo! they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. He was five-and-twenty years old when he became regent, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the **City of David**. Ahaz, his son, reigned in his stead. (2 Chron. xxvii. 1-9.)

* The High places were not removed: the people sacrificed, and burned incense still on the High places. (2 Kings xv. 35).

PART II.

THE CALL, CONSECRATION AND COMMISSION OF
ISAIAH (742 B.C.).**The Prophetic Vision.**

In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high, and lifted up, and His train filled the heavenly temple. Around it stood the Seraphim. Each one had six wings. With two he covered his face: and with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly. And one cried unto the other, saying:—

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts!”

“The whole earth is full of His glory!”

And the posts of the door moved at the voice of them that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

Then said I: “Woe is me! for I am undone! I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips! Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!”

Then flew one of the Seraphim unto me, having a hot stone in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar-hearth, and he laid it upon my mouth, and said:

“Lo! this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged.”

Also, I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?”

Then said I: “Here am I! Send me.”

And He said: “Go, and say to this people, ‘Ye shall surely hear, but not understand! Ye shall certainly see,

but not perceive ! Make the heart of this people fat, make their ears heavy, and close up their eyes : lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be turned back to Me, and be healed.' ”

Then I said : “ Ah Lord ! For how long ? ”

And He answered,

“ Until the cities be wasted, and without inhabitant !

Until the houses be without man, the land utterly desolate !

Till the Lord shall have removed men—far away !

Till there be great desolation, in the midst of the land !

But in it shall be a tenth—again it shall be eaten.

Like the terebinth, and like the oak—

When cut down, their stock remaineth in them :

So the holy seed shall be the stock thereof.”

(Isa. ch. vi. 1-13).

PART III.

THE EARLIER PREACHING OF ISAIAH, IN JOTHAM'S REIGN,
AND THE FIRST YEAR OF AHAZ (742-736 B.C.).

An Address to his Nation.

The Word, that Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah, and Jerusalem.

The Text from Prophecy.

And it shall come to pass, in the latter days—

The mountain of the Lord's House shall be established, at
the head of the mountains

It shall be exalted above the hills : all nations flow unto it.

Many peoples shall go and say, Come ye ! Let us go up

To the mountain of the Lord—to the House of the God of Jacob !

He will teach us His ways : in His paths we will walk.

For out of Zion goeth teaching : the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He shall judge among the nations : many peoples He shall chide.

To plow-shares shall they beat their swords : to pruning hooks their spears.

Nation 'gainst nation lifts not sword : and war they learn no more !

The Exhortation.

O house of Jacob ! Come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord ! For Thou hast forsaken Thy people, the House of Jacob ! They are replenished from the East, and are sorcerers like the Philistines, and they delight themselves in the children of foreigners. Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures : their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end to their chariots. Their land also is full of idols ! They worship the work of their own hand—that which their own fingers have made ! The common man boweth down before them, and the great man prostrateth himself. Therefore forgive them—thou shalt not ! Oh ! enter into the rock, and bury thyself in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be brought low, and the pride of man shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day !

For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and haughty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low. That day shall be upon all

the cedars of **Lebanon**, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of **Bashan**, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up: and upon every high tower, and upon every fortified wall: and upon all the **Tarshish-ships**, and upon all places of amusement. Then the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day! (Ch. ii. 1-17.)

Fate of Idolatry.

The idols also He shall utterly destroy: and they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His Majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats, as they go into the caves of the rocks, and on to the clefts of the ragged rocks for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His Majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth! (Ch. ii. 18-21.)

The Vanity of Trust in Man:

Oh! cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils! Wherein is he to be counted upon? For, behold! the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem, and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water: the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the diviner, and the elder: the captain of fifty, and the honoured man, and the counsellor, and the clever artizan, and the eloquent orator. And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them! And the people shall be oppressed every one by another, and every one by his neighbour.

The child shall behave himself proudly against the aged, and the base against the honourable. A man shall lay hold upon his brother, of the house of his father, saying, "Thou hast clothing! be thou our protector, and let this wreck be under thy care." Then shall he solemnly declare, "I will not be a binder up: for in my house is neither bread nor clothing. Make me not a protector of the people."

(Ch. ii. 22 ; iii. 1-7.)

A Lamentation.

Jerusalem is ruined ! Judah is fallen ! Their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of His glory. The appearance of their countenance doth witness against them : they openly show their sin, even as Sodom did : they hide it not. Alas ! for their souls ! They do evil unto themselves. Say of the just, that it is well with them ; for they shall enjoy the fruit of their doings. Alas ! for the wicked ! It is ill with them ; for they have the fruit of their own hands. O my people ! Children are their oppressors ! Women rule over them ! O my people ! Thy leaders lead thee wrong, and they destroy the way thy feet should take !

The Lord standeth up to plead ! He standeth to judge His Tribes ! The Lord entereth into controversy with the elders of His people, and the princes thereof. For thus saith the Lord God of Hosts, "Ye have eaten up the vineyard ! The spoil of the poor is in your houses ! What mean ye that ye beat My people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor ?"

(Ch. iii. 8-15.)

Complaint against Luxury in Dress.

This also the Lord hath said.

Because the daughters of Zion are proud and walk with

stretched-out necks, and with wanton eyes, tripping and mincing as they go, and tinkling with their anklets: therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will put them to shame. In that day the Lord will take away the splendour of their anklets, and their networks, and their forehead ornaments: the earrings, and the bracelets, and the ruffles: the tiaras, and the stepping-chains, and the girdles, and the smelling bottles, and the amulets: the finger-rings, and the nose-rings: the festival-robcs, and the mantles and the shawls, and the satchels: and the hand-mirrors, and the fine linen, and the turbans, and the veils. And it shall come to pass that instead of a sweet fragrance, there shall be a mouldy smell, and instead of a girdle, a rope: and instead of well-dressed hair, baldness: and instead of a mantle, a covering of sackcloth: and instead of beauty, branding. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty men in the war. Yea, her gates shall lament and mourn: and desolate shall she sit upon the ground. And in that day shall seven women take hold of one man, saying "We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name, that so our reproach may be taken away." (Ch. iii. 16-iv. 1.)

Seven Woes upon Seven Sins.

The first woe: Land-Covetousness.—Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no more room, and ye are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land!

In mine ears the Lord of Hosts saith:

"Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair ones, without inhabitant. Yea, ten acres of vine-

yard shall yield only one **bath**, and the seed of a homer shall yield only an ephah. Then shall lambs feed on their pasture, and on the waste places of those, who were well fed, shall goats feed."

The second woe : The Drink Sin.—Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink, that continue late in the night, till wine inflame them ! And the harp, and the viol, and the tabret, and the flute, and wine are in their feasts : but they regard not the working of the Lord, nor see the work of His hands. Therefore, my people go into captivity, because they have no sense. Their honoured men are famished, and their common people are dried up with thirst ! The grave hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure. Their glory, and their pomp, and their rejoicing descend unto her ! The common man shall be brought down, and the great man also shall be humbled, and the eyes of the proud shall be humbled ! But the Lord of Hosts shall be exalted in justice, and God, the Holy One, shall be honoured in righteousness.

The third woe : Indifference.—Woe unto them that are drawing punishment upon themselves with cords of unrighteousness, and sin as with a cart rope,—who are saying : "Let Him make speed, and let Him hasten His working that we may see it ! Let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh, and come that we may know what it is !"

The fourth woe : Moral Perversity.—Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil ! That put darkness for light, and light for darkness ! That put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter !

The fifth woe : Conceit.—Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight !

The sixth woe : Corruption.—Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mix strong drink, who justify the wicked for a bribe, and condemn the righteous !

The seventh woe : Oppression.—Woe unto them that pass wrong laws, and place oppressive measures on the statute book—for the purpose of doing the needy out of justice, and of depriving the poor of my people of his right—making widows their prey, and the fatherless their plunder !
(Ch. v. 8-12, 20-23 ; x. 1, 2.)

A Series of Six Judgments.

First judgment : Blighted Crops.—As the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their roots shall be rotten, and their blossoms shall disappear as dust, because they have cast away the teaching of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against His people ! He hath stretched forth His hand against them, and hath smitten them. And the hills did tremble, and their bodies were torn in the country ! For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still !
(Ch. v. 24, 25.)

Second judgment : Punishment of the Ten Tribes.—The Lord hath sent His word against Jacob, and it has fallen upon Israel. And all the people shall know it, even Ephraim and the inhabitants of **Samaria**, who are saying in the pride and obstinacy of their hearts :—“ The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones ! The sycamores are cut down, but we will use cedars instead ! ” Therefore the Lord hath raised up the princes of **Rezin** against them, and hath gathered their enemies together : even the Syrians before them, and the Philistines behind

them, and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still ! (Ch. ix. 8-12.)

Third judgment : National Disturbance.—The people turneth not unto Him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts ! Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel the head and the tail, branch and rush in one day, even the elder, and the honoured, who is the head, and the false prophet, who is the tail. For the leaders of this people lead them wrong ; and those who are led are destroyed. The Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows. For every one is a hypocrite, and an evil doer, and every mouth speaketh folly ! For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still !

(Ch. ix. 13-17.)

Fourth judgment : Internecine Strife.—See, wickedness is burning like a fire ! It is devouring the briers and thorns, and is setting fire to the thickets in the forest ! It is rising like the rising up of smoke ! Through the wrath of the Lord of Hosts the land is darkened : and the people are as fuel for the fire ; no man spareth his brother. One seizeth his neighbour on the right, and is hungry ; another eateth on the left hand, and is not satisfied. They eat every man the flesh of his own arm. Manasseh devours Ephraim ; and Ephraim, Manasseh. They are together against Judah ! For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still !

(Ch. ix. 18-21.)

Fifth judgment : Defeat and Disaster.—Oh, what will ye do in the day of judgment ? And in the desolation that is coming upon you from afar ? To whom will ye flee for help ? And where will ye entrust your glory ? Ye shall

only bow down among the prisoners, and fall among the slain. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still! (Ch. x. 3, 4.)

Sixth judgment: A Foreign Invasion.—He is lifting up a signal to a distant nation, and is summoning those who are at the end of the world. And see! they are coming with speed quickly! None of them shall be weary, nor stumble: none of them shall slumber, nor sleep! The girdle of their loins shall not be loosed, and the latchet of their shoes shall not be untied. Their arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent. Their horses' hoofs are counted as flint, and their chariots like a whirlwind. Their roar shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions. Verily, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it. In that day they shall roar over them like the roaring of the sea. And if one look unto the land, behold, darkness and sorrow, and the light of the heavens is darkened. (Ch. v. 26-30.)

A Promise of Better Days.

In that day shall the planting of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be good and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. Then it shall come to pass, that whosoever is left in Zion, and remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy, even every one that is counted among those that live in Jerusalem: for the Lord shall have washed away the uncleanness of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of justice, and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night.

For over the whole, the Shekinah glory shall be a canopy. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shade in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from the storm and rain. (Ch. iv. 2-6.)

The Lord's Vineyard.

Now will I sing for my well-beloved, a song of my beloved concerning His vineyard.

“My well-beloved hath a vineyard on a very fruitful hill.
He hath fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof,
He planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower
In the midst of it; He also made a wine-press therein.
Then He looked that it should bring forth grapes,
But it brought forth wild grapes.”

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah! judge I pray you betwixt Me and My vineyard. What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now, go to. I will tell you what I will do unto My vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up. I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will lay it waste. It shall not be pruned nor digged, but there shall come up briers and thorns. I will also command the clouds, that they rain not one drop of rain upon it. For;—

The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the House of Israel, and the men of Judah the plant that He has chosen. He looked for right, but behold might! for justice, but behold oppression! (Ch. v. 1-7.)

PART IV.

THE REIGN OF KING AHAZ, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF HIS
POLICY AND IDOLATRY (736-722 B.C.).**The Achievements of Ahaz.**

Ahaz was twenty years old, when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem : but he did not do that which was right in the sight of the Lord, like David, his father : for he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images of Baal. Moreover he burnt incense in the **valley of the sons of Hinnom**, and caused his children to pass through the fire, after the abominations of the nations, whom the Lord had cast out before the Children of Israel. He sacrificed also, and burnt incense on the High places, and on the heights, and under every green tree. Wherefore the Lord, his God, delivered him into the hand of the **king of Syria**, and he smote them, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus. He was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter ; (for Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant men ;) because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers. Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the ruler of the house, and Elkanah that was next to the king.

(2 Chron. xxviii. 1-7.)

Negotiations with Assyria (732 B.C.).

At that time Rezin, king of Syria, recovered Eloth to Syria, and drave the people of Judah from Eloth : and the Syrians came to Eloth, and dwelt there unto this day. So

Ahaz sent ambassadors to **Tilgath-Pileser**, king of Assyria saying, "I am thy servant, and thy son! Come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, who rise up against me." Then Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the House of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria.

And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him : for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to **Kir**, and slew Rezin.

Now Ahaz had gone to Damascus to do homage to Tilgath-Pileser, king of Assyria. And he saw an altar that was in Damascus. King Ahaz then sent to **Urijah** the priest the fashion and the pattern of the altar according to all the workmanship thereof. And Urijah, the priest, built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus. Then when the king was come back from Damascus, the king saw the altar : and the king approached the altar, and offered thereon ; yea, he burnt his burnt-offering, and his meal-offering, and poured his drink-offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace-offerings upon this altar. And he took the brazen altar, which was before the Lord from the forefront of the House, from between the altar and the House of the Lord, and put it on the north side of the altar. And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying : "Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt-offering, and the evening meal-offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice and his meal-offering, with the burnt-offering of all the people of the land, and their meal-offering, and their drink-offerings ; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the sacrifice : and the brazen altar shall be for me to enquire by."

Thus did Urijah, the priest, according to all that king

Ahaz commanded. And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases and removed the laver from off them, and took down the sea from off the brazen oxen that were under it, and put it upon a pavement of stone. And the covered way for the Sabbath, that they had built in the House, and the king's entrance without, he turned from the House of the Lord, because of the king of Assyria.

(2 Kings xvi. 10-18.)

The Conquest of Samaria (722 B.C.).

In the twelfth year of Ahaz, king of Judah, began the siege of Samaria. **Hoshea**, the son of Elah, was reigning in Samaria over Israel; and he reigned nine years. But he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, yet not as the kings of Israel had done that were before him. Against him came up **Shalmaneser**, king of Assyria, and Hoshea became his vassal, and brought him tribute. But the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent ambassadors to **So**, king of Egypt, and brought not his tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria came up through all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria.

(2 Kings xvii. 1-6.)

Ahaz in alliance with Assyria, but in distress.

About that time did king Ahaz send unto the king of Assyria for help. For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives. The Philistines also had invaded the towns of the Lowland, and of the **South** of Judah, and had taken Beth-Shemesh, and Aijalon, and

Gederoth, and Shocho with the villages thereof, and Timnath with the villages thereof, Gimzo also and the villages thereof, and they occupied these places. For the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz, king of Judah : for he did wantonness in Judah, and transgressed sore against the Lord. And Tilgath-Pileser, king of Assyria, came unto him. He distressed him, but strengthened him not. For Ahaz took away a portion out of the House of the Lord, and out of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave it unto the king of Assyria. But he helped him not. Yet in the time of his distress did this same king trespass yet more and more against the Lord. For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus who smote him ; and he said : “ Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice unto them, that they may help me.” But they were the ruin of him, and of all Judah. For Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the House of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the House of God, and shut up the doors of the House of the Lord, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. And in every separate town of Judah he made High places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers. Now the rest of his acts and of all his ways, first and last, behold they are written in the Book of the kings of Judah and Israel. And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of Jerusalem ; but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Judah. And Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead. (2 Chron. xxviii. 16-27.)

PART V.

PROPHECIES CONDEMNATORY OF THE POLICY OF
AHAZ (734 B.C.).**Isaiah and Ahaz. The Syro-Ephraimitish Alliance.**

Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and **Pekah**, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not prevail against it. And it was told the House of David, saying, "Syria is confederate with Ephraim." Then his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.

The first message to Ahaz.

Then the Lord said unto Isaiah: "Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou and **Shear-Jashub** thy son, at the end of the conduit of the Upper Pool in the highway of the **Fuller's Field**: and say unto him—'Take heed and be quiet. Fear not, neither be faint-hearted on account of the two ends of these smoking torches—the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, "Let us go up against Judah, and trouble it. Let us make a breach in it, and set up a new king in the midst of it, even **Ben-Tabeal**.'" Thus saith the Lord God: 'It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. The chief town of Syria is Damascus, and the king of Damascus is Rezin; and the capital of Ephraim is Samaria, and the king of Samaria is the son of Remaliah—

but within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. If ye will not hold fast to Jehovah, assuredly ye shall not be held fast by Him.’”

(Ch. vii. 1-9.)

A second message to Ahaz.

The Immanuel Prophecy.—The Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying : “ Ask from the Lord thy God a sign. Ask it either in the depth beneath or in the height above.” But Ahaz said, “ I will not ask a sign, neither will I test the Lord.” Then said the prophet : “ Hear ye now, O House of David ! It is a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also ? Therefore the Lord shall give you a sign Himself. See ! A young damsel has conceived, and will bear a son, and his name shall be Immanuel. Before he is able to discern between the evil and the good, to refuse the one, and to choose the other, he shall eat butter, and honey : for before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land, whose two kings thou fearest, shall be forsaken. And the Lord shall bring upon thee, and upon thy father’s house, days that have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah, even the king of Assyria. It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall hiss for the **fly**, that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the **bee**, that is in the land of Assyria : and they shall come, and shall settle all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all the thorn trees, and upon all the shrubs. In that same day shall the Lord shave with a hired razor, even with those, who are beyond the River (Euphrates), *i.e.* the king of Assyria, both head and foot, and the beard also shall be cut off. Then it shall come to pass that a man shall keep a young cow, and two sheep : and it shall come to pass that because

of the quantity of milk that they shall give he shall eat butter—butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land. Then every piece of land where there used to be a thousand vines worth a thousand pieces of silver, shall be for briers and thorns. Men shall go there with arrows and bows, for all the land shall be covered with briers and thorns. And upon all the hillsides, that used to be cultivated, shall no one come for fear of briers and thorns; but they shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of sheep. (Ch. vii. 10-25.)

A third message to Ahaz.

Destruction of Ephraim.—Further, the Lord said unto me,

“Take thee a large roll, and write on it with an ordinary pen these words, ‘Concerning **Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.**’” I then took with me trustworthy witnesses to write this, viz., Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah. (I had gone unto the prophetess, and she had conceived, and borne a son.) Then the Lord said unto me, “Call his name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz: for before the boy shall know how to say, ‘My father, and my mother,’ the riches of Damascus and the booty of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria.” (Ch. viii. 1-4.)

A fourth message to Ahaz.

An alliance with Syria and Samaria condemned.—Again the Lord spake unto me, saying:

“Forasmuch as this people refused the waters of **Shiloah** that flow softly, and put their trust in Rezin and Remaliah’s son: now, therefore, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the River, strong, and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his might. He shall come up over all his

channels, and go over all his banks, and pass through Judah : he shall overflow, and go over : he shall reach even unto the neck. Then the stretching out of his wings shall cover the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel!" (Ch. viii. 5-8.)

The True Trust.

Form alliances, O ye people, but ye shall be broken to pieces ! Listen to me, all ye of far lands, gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces : gird yourselves and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, yet it shall come to nought ! Issue your command, but it shall not stand ! "God is with us !" Thus the Lord spake to me with a strong Hand, thus He has instructed me that I should not walk in the way this people goes, saying to me, "Call not that an alliance, which the people shall call an alliance. Fear ye not what they fear, nor be afraid. Regard the Lord of Hosts Himself as the Holy One. Make Him the object of your fear, and your awe. Then He shall be a sanctuary unto you : but a stone of stumbling, and a rock of falling to both the Houses of Israel—a gin and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem—this also, for many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken !" (Ch. viii. 9-15.)

The Prophet's Retirement.

Bind up the Testimony: seal the Instruction among those who are my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, Who is hiding His Face from the House of Jacob : yea, I will look for Him. Behold ! I and the children, whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and omens unto Israel, from the Lord of Hosts, who dwelleth in Mount Zion. When they shall say unto you, "Consult those that have familiar spirits and wizards that peep and that mutter : should not

the people consult their God? For the living should they consult the dead? 'To the Instruction, and to the Testimony.' If they say not this, then no morning shall ever dawn upon them: but they shall pass through the land hardly bestead, and hungry. And it shall come to pass that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king, and their God, and look upward. For they shall look unto the earth, and behold trouble, and darkness, with dimness of anguish, and banishment into darkness." (Ch. viii. 16-22.)

A Brighter Day Dawning.

But the gloom shall be no more as it was in her trouble. In the former time He has afflicted the land of **Zebulon**, and the land of **Naphtali**: but in the latter time He will gloriously advance the country by the **way of the Sea**, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

For the people, that walked in darkness, shall see a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them shall the light shine. Thou hast multiplied the nation. Thou hast increased their joy. They joy before Thee according as they joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. The yoke that burdened them, the stick of their shoulder, and the rod of their driver, Thou hast broken in pieces as in the day of vengeance on **Midian**! All the weapons of the warrior in the battle, and all the blood-stained garments are now for burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given! The government shall be upon his shoulder. His name shall be "the Wonderful Counsellor," "The Hero God," "The Everlasting Father," "The Prince of Peace." Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end.

He shall sit upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with justice and righteousness, from henceforth even for ever. The Zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this. (Ch. ix. 1-7.)

PART VI.

MESSAGES TO ADJOINING PEOPLES—THE PHILISTINES, MOAB, EDM, ARABIA, AND SAMARIA.

In the year that king Ahaz died was this oracle (722 B.C.).

1. **Isaiah to the Philistines.**

Rejoice not thou, thou whole district of the Philistines ! For though the rod of him that smote thee is broken : yet out of the serpent's root shall come forth a viper, and its seed shall be a fiery flying serpent. The first-born of the poor, however, shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety ; but I shall destroy thy root with famine and I will slay thy remnant. Howl, O gate ! Cry, O city ! Thou art wholly destroyed, O Philistia ! For there is coming from the north a smoke, and a thoroughly disciplined army. What shall be the answer to the messengers of the nation ? This, that the Lord hath founded Zion, and that the poor of His people shall find refuge in it. (Ch. xiv. 28-32)

2. **The Prophetic message to Moab.**

The oracle concerning Moab.—In a night Ar of Moab is laid waste ! It is brought to silence ! In a night Kir of Moab is laid waste ! It is brought to silence !

Moab is gone up to his temple, even to Dibon, to the high places to weep. He mourns on Nebo, and on Medeba. On

every head is baldness, and every beard is cut off. In their streets they gird themselves with sackcloth. On the tops of their houses, and in their streets every one mourns, weeping abundantly. Heshbon crieth out, and Elealeh. Their voice is heard even unto Jahaz. The armed men of Moab cry out! Their soul trembleth within them. My heart crieth out for Moab! Her fugitives are at Zoar, at Eglath Shelishyah. They ascend the slope of Luhith with weeping. In the way to Horonaim they raise up a cry of destruction. The waters of Nimrim are desolate! The hay is withered away! The grass faileth! There is no green thing! Therefore the abundance which they have secured and laid up, they carry away with them over the "brook of the willows." The cry is gone round about the borders of Moab. The howling has reached unto the two **Eglaths**! The howling thereof has come to Beer-Elim! For the streams of **Dimon** are full of blood! For I am bringing upon Dimon further sorrow, even a lion upon those of Moab that escape, and upon the remnant of the country! (Ch. xv. 1-9.)

Message concerning the conduct of Moab.

"Send ye the tribute of lambs from the ruler of your land, even from Sela, through the wilderness, unto the Mount of the daughter of Zion."

An Embassy from Moab.

It shall come to pass that like wandering birds, like a scared nest, the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of the Arnon, saying:—

"Take counsel: execute justice. Make thy shade as the night in the midst of the noon-day. Hide the outcasts. Betray not him that fleeth to thee. Let mine outcasts, even Moab's, dwell with thee. Be thou a covert to them

from the face of the spoiler ! For now the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth ; the oppressors are consumed out of the land. In mercy the throne is established. He that sitteth upon it of the House of David judgeth in truth ; he seeks justice, and furthers righteousness."

The Answer to the Embassy.

"We have heard of the pride of Moab, of his overconfidence, of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his anger. But his boastings amount to nothing ! Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab : every one shall howl. For the grape-cakes of Kir-Haresheth shall ye mourn, for they are utterly stricken. The fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah ! The rulers of the nations have broken down the best plants thereof, which have come even unto **Jazer** : they twined through the desert : her branches were stretched out, they have gone over to the sea. Therefore I will weep with the weeping of Jazer for the vine of Sibmah. I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh ! The shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest has ceased ! Gladness and joy are taken away from the fertile field. And in the vineyards there is no singing, neither shouting. The treaders tread out no wine in the presses. I have made their shouting to cease. Wherefore my bowels sound as a harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-Heresh. And it shall come to pass when Moab appears weary on his high place, when he enters into his sanctuary to pray, that he shall not prevail.

The Prophet's Final Word.

This is the Word which the Lord hath already spoken concerning Moab : but the Lord hath now declared, saying, "Within three years, reckoned as the years of an hireling,

the glory of Moab shall be despised, with all the multitude of the great, and the remnant shall be very small and feeble. (Ch. xvi. 1-14.)

3. The Message concerning Edom.

An oracle of silence (Dumah).—One is calling to me out of Mount Seir, “Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?”

The watchman replies: “The morning cometh, and also the night. If ye will enquire, enquire. Return and come again.” (Ch. xxi. 11-12.)

4. The Message concerning Arabia.

Ye lodge in the evening in the thickets, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim. The inhabitants of the district of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty; they provided bread for those that had escaped: even for those who had fled from the sword, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the horrors of war.

This is the word which the Lord hath spoken unto me:—“Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, all the glory of **Kedar** shall fail: and the remnant of the number of archers, the men of might of the Children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the Lord God of Israel hath spoken it.” (Ch. xxi. 13-17.)

5. The Message concerning Damascus and Ephraim.

The captivity of Israel declared.—Behold Damascus is taken away from being a city! It is being made a heap of ruins! The towns of **Aroer** are forsaken: they are for flocks, which shall lie down, and no one shall make them afraid. The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim: the kingdom from Damascus; and the rest of Syria shall be as

the glory of the Children of Israel, saith the Lord of Hosts : for then it shall come to pass that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean. And it shall be as when the reaper gathereth the standing corn, and his hand reapeth the ears, yea, it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the **Valley of Rephaim**. Yet a glean- ing shall be left in it, as at the beating of the olives, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in its outmost fruitful branches (saith the Lord of Hosts). In that day man shall look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel. He shall not look to the altars and to the work of his own hands, neither shall he respect that which his fingers have made, either the **Astartes**, or the Sungods. In that day shall his strong cities be like the forsaken places of the **Hivites**, and the **Amorites**, which they abandoned before the Children of Israel ; and there shall be desolation. For thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the Rock of thy strength. Thou hast planted Adonis-groves, and didst set them with strange slips. In the day that thou didst plant, thou didst make a hedge around it, and in the morning thou didst cause thy seed to blossom. But the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief, and desperate sorrow ! (Ch. xvii. 1-11.).

PART VII.

THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH : HIS REFORMS : HIS SICKNESS :
AND THE ASSYRIAN INVASIONS (722-693 B.C.).

**Hezekiah's Reformation and the Military Events of
his Reign.**

Twenty and five years old was Hezekiah when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zechariah. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did. He removed the High places, and brake the images, and cut down the Asherahs, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made (for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it), and he called it a **piece of brass**. He put his trust in the Lord God of Israel : so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the Lord. He departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him, and he prospered whithersoever he went forth.

He rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. He smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen, even unto the fortified town.

And it came to pass in the reign of Hoshea, king of Israel, that the king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. At the end of a siege of three years they took it, even in the first year of Hezekiah, that is, the ninth year of Hoshea, king of Israel, Samaria was taken.

(2 Kings xviii. 1-10.)

The Purification of the Temple (722 B.C.).

In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the House of the Lord, and repaired them. And he brought in the priests, and the Levites, and gathered them together in a broad place on the east side, and said unto them : “ Hear me, ye Levites ! Sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the House of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth all pollution from the Holy Place. For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which is evil in the eyes of the Lord our God, and have forsaken Him, and have turned away their faces from the House of the Lord : they have turned their backs upon Him. They have also shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense, nor offered burnt offerings in the Holy Place unto the God of Israel. Wherefore the wrath of the Lord was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to be an astonishment and a hissing, as ye see with your eyes. For lo ! our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons, and our daughters, and our wives are in captivity because of this. Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that His fierce wrath may turn away from us. My sons ! be not now negligent ! For the Lord hath chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that ye should minister unto Him, and burn incense.”

Then the Levites arose and gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and came according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the Lord to cleanse the House of the Lord. And the priests went into the inner part of the House of the Lord to cleanse it, and brought out every unclean thing that they found in the temple of the Lord into the court of the House of the Lord. Then

the Levites took it, and carried it out across the brook **Kidron**.
(2 Chron. xxix. 3-12, 15, 16.)

The Celebration of the Passover.

And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the House of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover unto the Lord God of Israel.

So the messengers passed from town to town through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even as far as Zebulon ; but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. Many however, of Asher, and Manasseh, and Zebulon humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem. Also in Judah the hand of the Lord gave them one heart to do the commandment of the king and the princes, by the Word of the Lord. And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the Feast of unleavened bread in the second month—a very great congregation. And the Children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness. And the whole congregation took counsel to keep other seven days, and they kept other seven days with gladness. So there was great joy in Jerusalem. For since the time of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, there was not the like in Jerusalem. Then the priests and the Levites arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to His Holy Habitation, even unto Heaven.

(2 Chron. xxx. 1-14 ; 26, 27.)

Destruction of Idols and Regulation of Worship.

Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the towns of Judah, and brake in pieces the pillars, and hewed down the Asherim, and brake down the

High places, and all the altars in Judah, and Benjamin, in Ephraim also, and in Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all. Then all the Children of Israel returned every man to his possession into their own towns.

Hezekiah also appointed the courses of the priests, and the Levites after their courses. Moreover, he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion due unto the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the service of the Lord. Then Hezekiah commanded them to prepare chambers in the House of the Lord: and they prepared them. And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and true before the Lord his God; and in every work that he began in the service of the House of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and he prospered.

(2 Chron. xxxi. 1, 2, 4, 11, 20.)

Hezekiah's Sickness and Recovery (710 B.C.).

In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death.

And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came unto him, and said unto him: "Thus saith the Lord:—Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live."

Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, and said: "Remember, O Lord, I beseech Thee, how I have walked before Thee in truth, and with a perfect heart: and have done that which is good in Thy sight."

And Hezekiah wept sore.

Then came the Word of the Lord to Isaiah, saying:

"Go, and say to Hezekiah, 'Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father—I have heard thy prayer: I have

seen thy tears. Behold ! I will add unto thy days fifteen years : and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria : and I will defend this city.' And this shall be a sign unto thee from the Lord that the Lord will do this thing that He hath spoken. Behold ! I will cause the shadow on the steps, which has gone down on the **steps of Ahaz** with the sun to return backward ten steps."

So the sun returned ten steps by the steps which it had gone down.

For Isaiah had said, "Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover." Hezekiah also had said, "What is the sign that I shall go up to the House of the Lord?"

(Ch. xxxviii. 1-8 ; 21, 22.)

The Royal Patient's Psalm of Thanksgiving.

The writing of Hezekiah, king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness :—I said,

In the noontide of my days, I am going to the gates of the grave !

I am being deprived of the remainder of my days.

I shall not see the Lord, the Lord in the land of the living.

I shall behold man no more, when I shall dwell with those in Sheol.

My tent is taken up—it is removed from me as a shepherd's tent !

He has rolled up like a weaver my life : he cuts it off from the loom !

From day even to night—Thou wilt make an end of me !

I lay thinking till morning—As a lion, so He breaketh my bones !

From day even to night—Thou wilt make an end of me !

Like a swallow or crane, so I chattered : I did mourn as a dove.

My eyes fail looking up. Lord, I am oppressed ! Be Thou my surety.

What shall I say ? He hath both spoken unto me, and done it Himself.

I shall go solemnly all my years, because of the bitterness of my soul.

O Lord ! by these things men live : in such things wholly is my spirit's life.

So Thou wilt recover me, and make me to live.

Behold for my peace, I had great bitterness !

But Thou in love deliveredst my soul from the pit of corruption,

For Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.

For the Grave cannot praise Thee ! Death cannot celebrate Thee !

They that go down into the pit—they cannot hope for Thy faithfulness.

The living, the living ! He can praise Thee, as I do this day.

The father to the children maketh known Thy faithfulness.

The Lord is ready to save me. Therefore my stringed instruments will I strike

All the days of my life, in the House of the Lord.

(Ch. xxxviii. 9-20.)

The Invasion of Judah in 710 B.C. A truce.

Now about the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah did Sargon, the king of Assyria, come up against the fortified towns of Judah, and take them. And Hezekiah, king of Judah, sent to the king of Assyria to **Lachish**, saying, "I

have done wrong! Return from me. That which Thou puttest on me, I will bear."

Then the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah, king of Judah, three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the House of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which Hezekiah, king of Judah, had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria. (2 Kings xviii. 13-16.)

The Great Invasion by Sennacherib (701 B.C.).

After these things, and this faithfulness, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fortified towns, and planned to break them up. Then when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that his face was set against Jerusalem, he took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city. And they helped him. So there was gathered much people together, and they stopped all the fountains, and the brook that flowed through the midst of the land, saying, 'Why should the king of Assyria come, and find much water?' He also summoned up courage, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised up the towers, and he repaired the other wall, and **Millo**, in the city of David, and made weapons and shields in abundance. And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the broad place at the gate of the city, and spake encouragingly to them, saying: "Be strong and courageous. Be not afraid nor dismayed at the king of Assyria, nor at all the multitude that is with him. For there be more with us than with him!

With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles.”

And the people leaned upon the words of Hezekiah, the king of Judah.

After this did Sennacherib send his officers to Jerusalem : he himself, and all his army with him were at Lachish.

And the king of Assyria sent the **Rabshakeh** from Lachish to Jerusalem unto King Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the Upper Pool in the highway of the Fuller's field. Then came forth unto him **Eliakim** the son of Hilkiah, who was over the king's house, and **Shebna** the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the secretary.

The Assyrian boast.

And the Rabshakeh said unto them

“Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, ‘What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? I say thy counsel and strength for war are but vain things! Now, on whom dost thou trust, that thou art rebelling against me? Lo! Thou trustest on the staff of the broken reed, even Egypt: and if a man lean on it, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is the Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to all that trust in him. But if thou say to me “We trust in the Lord our God,” then is this not He whose High places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, “Ye shall worship before this altar only?”’ Now, see, give a wager, I pray you, to my master, the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able to put riders upon them! How then will you turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen? And am I now come up without

the Lord's consent against this land to destroy it? The Lord hath said unto me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.'"

Then said Eliakim, and Shebna, and Joah unto the Rabshakeh: "Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language, for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the hearing of the people on the wall."

But the Rabshakeh said, "Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? Hath he not sent me also to the men that sit on the wall—that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own water with you?"

Then the Rabshakeh stood, and cried in a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said:

"Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, 'The Lord will surely deliver us! this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.' Harken not to Hezekiah! For thus saith the king of Assyria, 'Make an agreement with me by tribute, and come out to me. Let each one of you eat of his own vine, and of his own fig tree, and drink water out of his own cistern, until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and grapes.' Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, 'The Lord will deliver us.' Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of **Hamath**, and **Arpad**? Where are the gods of **Sepharvaim**? Have those of Samaria delivered her out of my hand? Who are they of all the gods of these countries that have delivered their land out of

my hand, that Jehovah should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?"

But they held their peace, and answered him not a word; for the king's order was, saying, "Answer him not."

Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that was in charge of the king's house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the secretary, to Hezekiah, with their clothes rent, and told him the words of the Rabshakeh. And it came to pass, when King Hezekiah heard them, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the House of the Lord. He sent also Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz: and they said unto him:—

"Thus saith Hezekiah: 'This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blaspheming. The children indeed are come to the birth, but there is not strength to bring forth! It may be the Lord, thy God, will hear the words of the Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria, his master, hath sent to reproach the Living God, and will reprove the words, which the Lord thy God hath heard. Wherefore lift up prayer for the remnant that is left.'"

So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

(Ch. xxxvi., xxxvii. 1-5.)

The word of the Lord to Hezekiah.

And Isaiah said unto them:

"Thus shall ye say unto your master: 'Thus saith the Lord—Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the officers of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. Behold! I will send a spirit into him, and

he will hear a report, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

The second message of Sennacherib to Hezekiah.

Now the Rabshakeh had returned and found the king of Assyria warring against **Libnah**; for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. And he heard it said concerning Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia: "Behold! he is come forth to make war with thee." And when he heard it, he sent ambassadors to Hezekiah, saying:—"Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah, king of Judah, saying! 'Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, "Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." Behold! thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all countries by destroying them utterly. And shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, viz., **Gozan** and **Haran**, and **Rezeeph**, and the Children of **Eden** which were in **Telassar**. Where is the king of Hamath? And the king of Arpad? And the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of **Hena**, of **Ivah**?'"

(Ch. xxxvii. 6-13.)

Hezekiah's Prayer.

And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the ambassadors, and read it. Then Hezekiah went up unto the House of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord, saying:—

"O Lord of Hosts! God of Israel! Thou that dwellest between the Cherubim! Thou art the God, Thou the Only One, of all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou hast made heaven and earth! Incline Thine ear, O Lord! and hear. Open Thine eyes, O Lord! and see. Oh! hear all the

words of Sennacherib, who hath sent to reproach Thee, the Living God. Of a truth, O Lord ! the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries, and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone—therefore they have destroyed them. Now, I beseech Thee, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou art the Lord, even Thou the Only One."

Jehovah's final message to Assyria.

Then Isaiah, the son of Amoz, sent unto Hezekiah, saying:—"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to Me against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, this is the Word, which the Lord hath spoken concerning him—

"‘The virgin, the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn. The daughter of Jerusalem hath contempt for thee.’ Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? And against Whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? Even against the Holy One of Israel. By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, ‘By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the slopes of Lebanon. Now I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir-trees thereof, yea, I will enter into his highest height, the forest of his fruitful field. I have digged wells, and drunk water, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up the rivers of Upper and Lower Egypt.’

"Hast thou not heard that long ago I have planned it, and formed it in ancient times? Now, have I brought it to pass that thou shouldst be to lay waste fortified cities, and make

them ruined heaps. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded, they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the housetops, and as corn blasted before it be fully grown. But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against Me. Because thy rage against Me, and thy careless ease is come up into Mine ears, therefore will I put **My hook** in thy nose, and My bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way, by which thou camest.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, ‘He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor raise up a mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come into this city,’ saith the Lord ; ‘for I will defend this city to save it for Mine own sake, and for My servant David’s sake.’

“And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself, and the second year that which springeth of the same : but in the third year ye shall sow and reap—plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof. For the remnant that is escaped of the House of Jacob shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and those who escape out of Mount Zion. The Zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall do this.”

The fulfilled Word (701 B.C.).

And the Angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred and fourscore and five thousand. When they arose in the morning, behold ! they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib, king of Assyria, departed, and went, and returned and dwelt at Nineveh.

The Death of Sennacherib (681 B.C.).

Now it came to pass as he was worshipping in the temple of **Nisroch** his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword, and they escaped into the land of Armenia. Then **Esar-Haddon**, his son, reigned in his stead. (Ch. xxxvii. 14-38.)

The Renown of Hezekiah.

Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib, the King of Assyria, and from the hand of every enemy, and guided them on every side. And many brought gifts unto the Lord, to Jerusalem, and precious things to Hezekiah, king of Judah. So he was exalted in the sight of all nations from that time henceforth. (2 Chron. xxxii. 22.)

A Psalm of Victory.

God is our refuge and stronghold : a help near in trouble !
 Therefore we'll not fear, though the earth do shake—
 Though the mountains be moved, in the midst of the seas !
 Though the waves thereof roar, and be troubled ;
 Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof !
 There is a river—its streams make glad the City of God,
 The Holy Place of the Tabernacles of the Most High.
 God is in her midst ! She shall not be moved !
 God hath helped her, even at the morning dawn !
 The nations raged ! The kingdoms were moved !
 He uttered His voice ! The earth melted !
 The Lord of Hosts is with us : the God of Jacob our
 Refuge sure.
 Come behold the works of the Lord—what desolations in
 the earth He makes !

He maketh wars to cease, unto the end of the earth !

He breaketh the bow : He cutteth the spear in sunder !

He burneth the chariots in the fire.

Be still and know that I am God, high among the nations,
high in the earth.

The Lord of Hosts is with us : the God of Jacob—our
Refuge sure. (Psalm xlv.)

PART VIII.

A SERIES OF PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE CERTAIN DOOM OF ASSYRIA.

Isaiah to Assyria (720-710 B.C.).

The Divine Supremacy.—O Assyrian ! thou art the rod of Mine anger, and the staff in thine hand is that of Mine indignation. I will send him against a profane nation, and against a people, with whom I am displeased, will I give him a command, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. He indeed purposeth not so, neither does his heart think so. For it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. He is saying : “Are not my generals all kings ? Is not **Calno** as **Carchemish** ? Is not Hamath as Arpad ? Is not Samaria as Damascus ? As my hand hath found the kingdoms that worship idols, and whose graven images did excel those of Jerusalem, and of Samaria, shall I not do unto Jerusalem and her idols as I have done unto Samaria, and her idols ?”

Wherefore it shall come to pass that when the Lord hath performed all His work upon Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem,

I will punish the fruit of the boastful heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his proud looks. For he is saying, "By the strength of my hand have I done this, and by my wisdom, for I am wise. I have **removed the boundaries** of the peoples, and have robbed their treasures, and have put down kings as their superior. Yea, my hand hath found out the riches of the people, as one findeth a nest: and as one gathereth the eggs that are left in it, have I gathered all the earth. There was none that moved its wing, or opened its mouth, or chirped against me." (Chap. x. 5-14.)

The Destruction of Pride.

Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? Shall the saw magnify itself against him that moveth it? As if a rod should shake those that lift it up, or as if a staff should lift up what is not wood! Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, send leanness among his fat ones, and instead of his glory He shall kindle a burning, like the burning of a fire. And the **Light of Israel** shall be a fire, and his Holy One a flame, and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day, and shall consume the glory of the forest, and of the fruitful field, both soul and body, and they shall be as when a sick man pineth away. Then the rest of the trees of his forest shall be so few, that a child may count them.

But in that day it shall come to pass that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the House of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them, but shall stay in truth upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. For though thy people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, the remnant of them shall return: the consumption that is decreed shall overflow with righteousness. A consumption

indeed, a determined one, shall the Lord of Hosts make in the midst of all the land. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Hosts: "O My people that dwellest in Zion! Be not afraid of the Assyrian, though he shall smite thee with his rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, even as Egypt did. For yet a very little while, and the indignation against thee shall cease, and Mine anger shall be for his destruction. And the Lord of Hosts shall stir up against him a scourge, as in the slaughter of **Midian**, at the rock of **Oreb**. As His rod was lifted up upon the Red Sea in the case of Egypt, so shall He lift it up against him: and it shall come to pass in that day that his burden will be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck."

Sargon's Invasion (710 B.C.) described.

The Destroyer is come up from the North! He is come to Aiath!

He is passed to Migron! At Michmash he hath pitched his camp!

They are gone over the Pass! "Let our quarters be at Geba!"

Ramah is afraid: Gibeah of Saul is in flight.

Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim! Hearken, O Laish!

O Anathoth, answer her! Madmenah hurries away.

The inhabitants of Gebim prepare for flight.

This very day he remains at Nob.

He shakes his hand against the mountain of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem!

The Issue.

Behold! The Lord, the Lord of Hosts lops the bough with fearful force.

The high ones are hewn down—the haughty ones are humbled.

He cuts down the thickets of the forest with the iron, and Lebanon falls by the Mighty One. (Ch. x. 15-34.)*

The Prophet's Surprise and Grief at the People's Joy (710 B.C.).

A message concerning the **Valley of Vision**, *i.e.*, Jerusalem.

What's the matter now? Why have you all gone up to the house-tops? Thou art full of stir, a tumultuous city, a joyous city! Thy slain are not slain with the sword, nor killed in battle. All thy rulers are fled together: they are made prisoners without the archers: all that are found of thee are seized while they are fleeing far away!

Then said I, "Look away from me! I will weep bitterly; labour not to comfort me—because the daughter of my people is spoiled. For this is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity from the Lord God of Hosts in the Valley of Vision—breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains."

Elam bears the quiver with troops of men, and horsemen: **Kir** uncovers the shield. And it has come to pass that thy choicest valleys are full of chariots, and the horsemen set themselves in array at the gate. He has uncovered the covering of Judah!

Thou didst look in that day to the armour in the **Forest House**, and didst see the breaches also in the City of David that they are many. Ye gathered together the waters of the **Lower Pool**. Ye have numbered also the houses of Jerusalem, and houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall. And ye made also a ditch between the two walls for

* See page 91 for Ch. xi.

the water of the old pool. But ye have not looked unto the Doer of this, neither have had respect unto Him that decreed it long ago !

In that day did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping and to mourning, and to cutting of the hair, and to girding with sackcloth : but, behold ! joy and gladness, slaying of oxen, and killing of sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine—men saying, “ Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”

And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of Hosts Himself, “ Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die,” saith the Lord God of Hosts. (Ch. xxii. 1-14.)

The Divine Purpose.

The Lord of Hosts hath sworn, saying : “ Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass. And as I have purposed, so shall it stand. I will break the Assyrian in My land, and upon My mountains tread him under foot. Then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden from off their shoulders. This is the Purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth ! This is the Hand that is stretched out upon all the nations ! For the Lord of Hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it ? And His Hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back ? (Ch. xiv. 24-27.)

The Overthrow of Assyria.

Ah ! Thou crowd of many peoples ! Thou who makest a noise, like the noise of the seas ! Oh ! the rushing of nations, a rushing like to the rushing of mighty waters ! The nations are rushing like the rushing of many waters ! But God rebukes them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like the whirling dust before the whirlwind.

“ Lo ! behold ! in the evening—panic ! In the early

morn—nothing!” This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us. (Ch. xvii. 12-14.)

Assyria no cause of Terror to Egypt.

Ah ! thou land of the buzzing of insects ! Thou country beyond the rivers of Ethiopia ! That sendeth ambassadors over the sea, even in vessels of papyrus upon the waters ! Go, swift messengers, to the nation tall and polished, to a people terrible from their origin up till now—a nation that meteth out, and treadeth down, whose land the rivers flow through, and say : “O all ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth ! When one lifteth up an ensign on the mountains, see ye ! When one bloweth a trumpet, hear ye ! For thus hath the Lord said unto me : ‘I will take My rest, and I will consider in My dwelling-place. I will remain still, like clear heat in sunshine, and like a cloud of moisture in the heat of harvest. For before the harvest, when the blossom is over, and the flower becometh a ripening grape, He both cutteth off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and taketh away and cutteth down the branches. They shall be left together to the wild birds of the mountains, and to the wild beasts of the earth. The birds of prey shall summer upon them, and all the wild beasts of the earth shall winter upon them. In that time shall homage be paid unto the Lord of Hosts, by a people tall and polished, a people terrible from their origin till now—a nation who meteth out, and treadeth down, whose land the rivers pass through—even at Mount Zion, the place where the Name of the Lord of Hosts is.’” (Ch. xviii. 1-7.)

PART IX.

THE PROPHETIC DENUNCIATION OF AN ALLIANCE
WITH EGYPT.**The Deposition of Shebna, or Royal Treasurer, declared.**

Thus saith the Lord God of Hosts: "Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto **Shebna**, who is over the State: and say, 'What doest thou here? Whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that cutteth out a place for himself in the rock. Behold! the Lord will hurl thee away violently, O thou strong man! He will lay sure hold on thee! He will assuredly turn and toss thee, like a ball into a wide country! There shalt thou die, and there shall go the chariots of thy glory, O thou shame of thy Lord's house! For I am driving thee from thy station! Yea, from thy rank He shall pull thee down.' " (Ch. xxii. 15-19.)

Shebna's Successor Announced.

And it shall come to pass in that day that I will call My servant **Eliakim**, the son of Hilkiah, and I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand, and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulders so that he shall open, and none shall shut, and he shall shut, and none shall open. I will also fasten him as a tent peg in a sure place, and he shall be a throne of glory to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all the small vessels, from the vessels of cups even to

all the vessels of flagons. "In that day," saith the Lord of Hosts, "shall the peg that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall: and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off." For the Lord hath spoken it.
(Ch. xxii. 20-25.)

Isaiah to Egypt (710-705 B.C.).

Overthrow of Ethiopia declared.—In the year that the Tartan came against Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against it, and took it: at that same time the Lord spake by Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saying: "Go, and loose thy mantle from off thy loins, and put thy sandal from off thy foot." And he did so, and went about without mantle or sandal. Then the Lord said: "Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked about without mantle, and barefoot for three years,—it shall be a sign and omen upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia: for so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, young and old, stripped and barefoot, even with uncovered buttocks—the shame of Egypt. Then shall they (of Jerusalem) be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia on which they depended, and of Egypt, in which they gloried. And the inhabitant of the sea-coast shall say in that day: 'Behold! such is the power on which we depended, and whither we were going for help, to be delivered from the king of Assyria! How shall we escape?'"
(Ch. xx. 1-6.)

An Alliance with Egypt condemned.

"Woe to the rebellious children," saith the Lord, "that take counsel, but not of Me, and that cover themselves with a covering, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin! That set out to go down to Egypt, and have not asked at My Mouth—to strengthen themselves in the strength of

the Pharaoh, and to trust in the shade of Egypt! Therefore shall the strength of the Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shade of Egypt your confusion."

"They shall be wholly ashamed of a people that cannot profit them, nor be an help, nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach."

(For their rulers were at **Zoan**, and their ambassadors had come to **Hanes**.)

A Message concerning the Beasts going to the South.

To the land of trouble and anguish—with its lions, vipers and serpents!

They carry their riches upon young asses—their treasures upon camels' backs.

To a people that cannot profit—(Egypt helps in vain, and to no purpose)—

Therefore of her have I said—"The braggart—that sitteth still."

The Prophet told to write his Testimony down.

Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and note it on a roll that it may be known for the time to come for ever and ever: "This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the teaching of the Lord. They say to the seers, 'See not!' and to the prophets, 'Prophesy not unto us right. Speak unto us smooth things! Prophesy deceitful things! Get you out of the way: turn aside out of the path! Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us!'"

"Wherefore," thus saith the Holy One of Israel: "Because ye despise this Word, and trust in oppression, and perverseness, and depend thereon: therefore this iniquity of yours shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, a bulging out

in a high wall, the breaking of which cometh suddenly in a moment. He shall break it as the breaking of the potter's vessel, that is broken in pieces. He shall not spare : so that there shall not be found in the breaking of it a piece to carry fire from the hearth, or to take water in out of the well."

For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel :

"In returning to Me, and in rest shall ye be saved.

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

And ye would not. For ye said :

"No ! but we will flee upon the horses (of Egypt)."

"Therefore, ye shall flee."

And ye said, "We will ride upon the swift."

"Therefore, shall they that pursue you be swift.

"One thousand of you shall flee at the rebuke of one : at the rebuke of five shall ye flee.

"Till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, as an ensign on a hill."
(Ch. xxx. 6-17.)

God's Argument with His People.

And yet the Lord will wait that He may be gracious unto you. He will be exalted that He may have mercy upon you ! For the Lord is a God of wisdom. Blessed are all they that wait for Him !

Oh ! thou people that dwellest in Zion, in Jerusalem, thou shalt weep no more ! He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry. When He shall hear it, He will answer thee. And the Lord shall give thee adversity as bread, and affliction as water. And thy Teacher shall not be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy Teacher, and thine ears shall hear a Voice behind thee, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it," when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. Then shalt thou defile also the

covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold—thou shalt cast them away as an unclean cloth—thou shalt say unto it, “Get thee hence.” Then shall He give the rain to thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground with ; and bread of the increase of the ground, and it shall be rich and plenteous. In that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. The oxen likewise, and the young asses, that plough the ground, shall eat savoury provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel, and with the fan. Then there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of water in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the wound of their stroke.

(Ch. xxx. 17-26.

The Day of Divine Vengeance against Judah's Enemies.

Behold ! The Name of the Lord comes from afar !

With anger aflame, and thick smoke !

His lips—they're full of wrath : His tongue is a devouring fire ;

His breath is an overflowing stream—it reaches to the middle
of the neck,

It sifts the nations, with the sieve of destruction.

A bridle causing them to err shall be on the people's jaws.

Deliverance promised.

Ye shall have a song as in the night when a festival is kept : and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a musical instrument to come into the Mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty One of Israel. And the Lord shall cause the Voice

of His glory to be heard, and shall show the coming down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with a crashing, and tempest, and hailstones. And through the Voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down. He shall smite him with a rod : and every blow of the staff of doom which the Lord shall lay upon him shall be with tabrets and harps (on your part)—in battles of the shaking of His Hand will He fight with him. For the **funeral pyre** is already ordained ; for **Moloch** it is prepared. It hath been made deep and large : the pile thereof is fire and much wood—the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, shall kindle upon it.

(Ch. xxx. 27-33.)

The Folly of Trust in Egypt.

Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help ! that depend upon horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen, because they are very strong ; but do not look unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord ! Yet He also is wise ! He bringeth calamity, and calleth not back His Words ! He will arise against the house of evil-doers, and against the help of them that work iniquity. Consider this. “The Egyptians are men, and not God ! Their horses are flesh, and not spirit ! When the Lord shall stretch out His Hand, both he that helpeth shall fall and he that is helped shall fall—yea, they all shall fail together !”

For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me :—

1. “Like as when the lion and the young lion growleth over his prey, if a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them. So shall the Lord of Hosts come down to fight for Mount Zion, and for the Hill thereof.”

2. "Like as mother birds flying above their nest,
 So will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem.
 Defending it, He will also deliver it.
 Passing over it, He will preserve it !

"O Children of Israel, turn ye unto Him, from whom ye have deeply revolted.

"Then shall every man cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which his own hands have sinfully made for him. Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not the sword of man : and the sword shall devour him, not the sword of man. He shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall pay tribute. His stronghold shall be passed in fear : his princes shall be dismayed at their own standard !" Thus saith the Lord whose fire is in Zion, and whose hearth is in Jerusalem. (Ch. xxxi. 1-9.)

An Oracle concerning Egypt.

Behold ! The Lord rides upon a swift cloud ! He comes into Egypt !

The idols of Egypt are moved before Him ! The heart of Egypt melts within her !

I will set Egypt against Egypt : they shall fight against one another.

Neighbour against neighbour : city against city : kingdom against kingdom.

The courage of Egypt shall fail within her : will destroy her counsel :

They will consult the idols, and the diviners—

Those that have familiar spirits, and wizards.

Yea, I will give Egypt over into the hand of a cruel master,

And a fierce **king** shall rule over them.

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts. (Ch. xix. 1-4.)

A Vision of Destruction.

The waters fail from the sea ! The Nile is wasted, and
dried up !

The rivers are stagnant : the Nile canals are empty and
dried up !

The reeds and papyrus-plants wither away !

The meadows by the Nile—on the bank of the Nile,

Every plot by the Nile—wither, disappear, and are no more !

The fishers mourn ! All that fish in the Nile lament !

They that spread their nets on its waters languish !

The workers in fine flax, the cotton weavers are con-
founded !

The pillars of the land are broken ! The labourers are
afflicted !

The princes of Zoan are at their wit's end ! The wise
counsellors of Pharaoh—foolish is their counsel !

How can ye say unto Pharaoh, " I am the son of the wise,
the son of ancient kings " ?

Where are thy wise men ? Let them declare and tell to thee
What the Lord of Hosts hath purposed concerning Egypt.

Fools are the princes of Zoan ! Deceived—the princes of

Noph !

They have misled her, who are the stay of the tribes of
Egypt.

The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in her midst :

And they have misled Egypt in all her doings,

Even as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.

There shall not be anything for Egypt to do—

Neither for the head nor tail, neither for palm branch or
rush.

In that day shall Egypt be like unto women :

She shall be afraid, because of the shaking of the Hand—
The Hand, which the Lord of Hosts shaketh over her.
And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt.
The very mention of it shall make men afraid.
Because of the Purpose of the Lord of Hosts
Which He hath purposed against Egypt.

(Ch. xix. 5-17.)

The Hope of Egypt's Conversion.

In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear by the Lord of Hosts. One of them shall be called "**Ir Ha-Heres**."* In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land, and a **pillar** at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign, and for a witness unto the Lord of Hosts in the land of Egypt. For they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and He shall send them a deliverer, and a mighty one, and he shall deliver them. Then the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall worship with sacrifice and meal-offerings: yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord and perform it. The Lord is the smiter of Egypt, but He shall smite and heal it. Then they shall return to the Lord and He shall be inquired of by them, and shall heal them. In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall worship along with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt, and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth: and these the Lord shall bless, saying: "Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My Hands, and Israel Mine inheritance."

(Ch. xix. 18-25.)

* City of destruction, or city of the sun.

PART X.

THE PROPHET URGES REPENTANCE ON HIS OWN PEOPLE.

Warning drawn from the Siege of Samaria (722 B.C.).

Ah ! the crown of pride ! Ah ! the drunkards of Ephraim !
Their glorious beauty—alas ! 'tis a fading flower !

On the top of the fat valleys ; they're overcome with wine !
Behold ! The Lord hath a mighty, and a strong one—a
tempest of hail !

A destroying storm—a flood of mighty waters, overflowing.

He is casting her down to the earth with His Hand.

The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under feet, and the glorious beauty, which is situated on the head of the fertile valley, shall be a fading flower, as the early fruit before its season : which he that looketh upon and seeth, while it is yet in his hand, eateth up. In that day, the Lord of Hosts shall be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of His people. He shall also be for a spirit of justice to him, that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them, that turn the battle to the gate.

The State of Jerusalem.

But these also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way ! The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink : they are swallowed up of wine : they are out of the way through strong drink. They err in vision : they stumble in judging ! All their tables are covered with vomit and filthiness : there is no place clean.

“Whom will he teach knowledge?” say they, “and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn away from the breast! For it is precept upon precept, line upon line: here a little, and there a little.”

“Yes, with stammering lips, and a foreign tongue, will He speak to this people. For to them he said, ‘This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest: and this is the refreshing,’ but they would not hear. Yes, indeed, the Word of the Lord shall be unto them precept upon precept: line upon line, line upon line: here a little, and there a little (as they say), that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.”

Oh! hear the Word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people in Jerusalem!

Because ye have said, “We have made a covenant with death, and with the grave we are in agreement: when the overflowing scourge shall pass along, it shall not come unto us—we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.”

Therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, “Behold! I will lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation. He that trusteth on it shall not be confounded. Justice also will I make the line, and righteousness the plummet. The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place. Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with the grave shall not stand. When the overflowing scourge shall pass along, then ye shall be trodden down by it. As often as it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass

along, both by day and by night : and it shall be a vexation to you only to learn the news. The bed shall be too short for a man to stretch himself upon it ! The covering shall be too narrow for him to wrap himself in it ! For the Lord shall rise up as in **Mount Perazim** ; He shall be wroth as in the **Valley of Gibeon**, that He may do His work, His strange work, and bring to pass His act, His strange act.

(Ch. xxviii. 1-21.)

The Lesson of Providence.

Now, therefore, be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong. For I have heard from the Lord God of Hosts of a consumption, that is determined upon the whole land. Give ye ear, and hear my voice : hearken, and hear my speech. Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow ? Doth he open and break the clods of the ground ? When he hath made smooth the surface thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and put in the wheat in rows, and the barley in the appointed place, and the rye in its border ? Doth not his God instruct him in discretion ? Doth He not teach him ? For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument. A cart wheel is not turned about upon the cummin : but the fitches are beaten out with a stick, and the cummin with a rod. Is bread corn bruised ? No : he is not for ever threshing it, nor driving over it his cart-wheel and his horses ; he doth not bruise it. This also cometh from the Lord of Hosts, who is Wonderful in counsel, and Excellent in working !

(Ch. xxviii. 22-29.)

The coming Judgment against Jerusalem, with her Deliverance announced.

Oh ! **Ariel ! Ariel !** Thou city where David encamped ! Add ye a year to this year ! Let the feasts be kept in their

course ! Then will I distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow : but she shall be unto Me as Ariel.* I am going to encamp against thee, and to lay siege to thee with a mound, and to raise up fortifications against thee. And thou shalt be brought down, thou shalt speak from the ground, and thy speech shall be uttered feebly from the dust, and thy voice shall be from the ground as of one that hath a familiar spirit, and thy speech shall be a whisper out of the dust. But the multitude of thy foes shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be like the rapidly passing chaff, that disappeareth suddenly. For thou shalt be visited of the Lord of Hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire. Then the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her, and her citadel—all that distress her shall be as a dream of a night vision. It shall then be as when an hungry man dreameth, and lo ! he eateth : but he awaketh, and his soul is empty ! Or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and lo ! he drinketh : but he awaketh, and behold ! he is faint, and his soul thirsteth !

So shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against Mount Zion. (Ch. xxix. 1-8.)

An Exhortation to True Worship.

Ye are amazed, and wonder ! Ye shut your eyes, and are blind ! Ye are drunken, but not with wine ! Ye stagger, but not with strong drink ! For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep and hath closed your eyes, O ye prophets, and your heads, O ye seers, hath He covered. And the vision of you all is become as the words of a book

* The hearth or lion of God.

that is sealed, which men hand over to one that is learned, saying, "Read this, I pray you."

And he saith, "I cannot, for it is sealed."

Then the book is given to him that is not learned, saying, "Read this, I pray you."

And he saith, "I am not learned."

Wherefore the Lord saith: "Forasmuch as this people draw near unto Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear for Me is taught by the teaching of men:—Therefore, behold! I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, a marvellous work, and a wonderful thing! The wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord! Who do their works in the dark, and say, "Who seeth us? Who knoweth us?" O, you turn things upside down! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay? Shall the work say of him that made it, "He made me not"? Or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, "He had no understanding"? (Ch. xxix. 9-16.)

A Bright Future.

A very little while, is it not? and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a desert! And in that day shall the deaf hear the words that are written, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also shall have increase of joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy one of Israel. For the terrible one shall be brought to nought, and the scorner consumed, and all that watch for iniquity cut off—those that make men

offenders by their words, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn justice aside by things of nought. Thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the House of Jacob:—"Jacob shall not again be ashamed, neither shall his face again wax pale: for when his children shall see the work of Mine Hands in his midst, they shall sanctify My Name, yea they shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that erred in spirit shall get understanding, and they that murmured shall receive instruction." (Ch. xxix. 17-24.)

The Prophet's Indictment of Jerusalem: three charges.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Lord hath spoken.

1. "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me! The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; Israel doth not know—My people doth not consider!"

Ah, sinful nation! A people laden with iniquity! A seed of evil-doers! Children that deal corruptly! They have forsaken the Lord: they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger: they have turned away backward!

2. "Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more! The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no sound place in it. Wounds and bruises and festering sores! They have not been pressed out, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment! Your country is desolate! Your cities are burned with fire! Your land, strangers devour it in your presence! Yea, it is desolate, as the overthrowing of strangers! And the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard! As a hut in a garden

of cucumbers ! As a besieged city !” Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as **Sodom**—we should have been like unto **Gomorrah** !

Hear the Word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom ! Give ear unto the Teaching of our God, ye people of Gomorrah !

3. “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me ?” saith the Lord. “I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand—this treading of My courts ? Bring no more oblations of vanity—an incense of abomination it is unto Me ! The new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies—I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting ! Your new moons, and your appointed feasts My soul hateth ; they are a trouble unto Me. I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands I will hide Mine Eyes from you : yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear—your hands are full of blood-guiltiness. Wash you ; make you clean. Put away the evil of your doings from before Mine Eyes. Cease to do evil. Learn to do well. Seek justice. Put the oppressor right. Pronounce in favour of the fatherless : plead the cause of the widow.”

The Conclusion.

“Come now, and let our reasoning cease,” saith the Lord :
 “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as
 snow.

Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the
 land.

If ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword.”
The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. (Ch. i. 2-20.)

A Lament over the State of Jerusalem.

How has the faithful city become an harlot ! She that was
full of justice !

Righteousness lodged within her : but now murderers !

Thy silver is become dross—thy wine is mixed with water !

Thy princes are become rebels—even companions of thieves !

Every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards !

They right not the fatherless—the widow’s cause they take
it not up.

Therefore, saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, the Mighty
One of Israel ;

Ah ! I will rid Me of Mine adversaries, and avenge Me of
Mine enemies !

And I will turn My Hand upon thee, and purely purge away
thy dross,

And take away all thine alloy.

I will restore thy judges as at the first, thy counsellors as at
the beginning.

Afterward thou shalt be called—The righteous City ! The
faithful City !

Zion shall be redeemed with justice—her converts with
righteousness.

Together shall be the destruction of transgressors and sinners.

And they that forsake the Lord—they shall be consumed !

For ye shall be ashamed of the terebinths, which ye desired :

And confounded on account of the gardens which ye have
chosen.

For ye shall be as a terebinth whose leaf fadeth—as a garden
that hath no water.

And the strong one shall be as tow, his work as a spark—
They shall both burn together, no one quenching them.

(Ch. i. 21-31.)

Warning Words to Careless Women.

Rise up, ye women that are at ease! Hear my voice, ye careless daughters! Give ear unto my speech! In not much more than a year shall ye be troubled, ye careless women! For the vintage shall fail—the summer gathering shall not come!

Tremble, ye women that are at ease! Be troubled, ye careless ones! Strip you, and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins! They shall smite upon their breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers, yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: for the palace shall be forsaken: the populous city shall be desolate: Ophel and the watch-tower shall be for dens for ever, the joy of wild asses, the pasture of flocks—until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high. Then the wilderness shall be a fruitful-field, and the fruitful-field shall be counted for a forest. Then justice shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful-field: and the result of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence for ever. Then my people shall dwell in a peaceful habitation, in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places!

But oh, the downfall, the downfall of the forest! The city is being cast down into a low place! Blessed then shall ye be that sow beside all waters, that loose the foot of the ox and the ass.

(Ch. xxxii. 9-20.)

PART XI.

THE PROPHET'S MESSAGE TO TYRE AND SIDON.

Isaiah to Tyre: the Metropolis of Commerce (709 B.C.).

The divine message concerning Tyre.

Howl, ye ships of **Tarshish**! for it is laid waste, so that there is not a house, and no entrance any more! From the island of **Kittim** this is made known to them. Be still, ye inhabitants of the coast-land! Thou whom the merchants of Sidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished! On great waters the seed of Shihor, the harvest of the Nile was her revenue: yea, she was the mart of the nations. Be thou ashamed, O Sidon! For the sea hath spoken, even the stronghold of the sea, saying, "I have not travailed nor brought forth children: neither have I nourished up young men, nor brought up virgins."

When the report cometh to Egypt—they shall be sorely pained at the report concerning Tyre. Pass ye over to Tarshish! Howl, ye inhabitants of the coast! Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? Her own feet carried her afar off to sojourn.

"Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, that giveth crowns, whose merchants are princes, whose traders are the honourable of the earth?"

"The Lord of Hosts hath purposed it to stain the pride of all glory—to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth."

Overflow thy land as the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish! There is now no girdle. He hath stretched out His Hand over the sea: He hath shaken kingdoms. The Lord hath

given a commandment against the merchant city, to destroy the strongholds thereof. And He has said: "Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, thou daughter of Sidon! Arise: pass over to Kittim: there also shalt thou have no rest! Behold! The land of the Chaldeans! This people is not! The Assyrian hath made it a wilderness! They set up their siege-towers—they raised up their palaces: but he hath brought it to ruin! Howl, ye ships of Tarshish! Your stronghold too shall be laid waste. And it shall come to pass in that day that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years—the duration of one king: after the end of seventy years, shall Tyre do as in the song of the harlot.

"Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that has been forgotten! Make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou may'st be remembered!"

And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth: and her profits and her hire shall be consecrated to the Lord. It shall not be treasured or laid up. Her profits shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, that they may eat sufficiently, and have splendid clothing.

(Ch. xxiii. 1-18.)

PART XII.

A SERIES OF PROPHECIES CONCERNING BABYLON.

Isaiah to Babylon (710-702.). Three Prophecies.

The first message concerning Babylon, the Desert of the Sea.—As whirlwinds in the south sweep along! As it

cometh from the desert, from a terrible land ! A grievous vision is declared unto me ! “The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth ! Go up, O **Elam** ! Besiege, O **Media** ! All the sighing thereof have I made to cease.”

Therefore my loins are filled with pain ! Pangs have taken hold upon me as the pangs of a woman that travaileth ! I was bowed down as I heard this : I was dismayed when I saw it. My heart palpitated : fearfulness affrighted me ! The night of my pleasure hath He turned into fear unto me.

“Prepare the table.”

“Watch in the watch-tower.”

“Eat, drink.”

“Arise ye princes, prepare the shield.”

Thus hath the Lord said unto me : “Go, set a watchman : let him declare what he seeth.”

And he saw an army, a troop of horsemen, a troop of asses, and a troop of camels : and he hearkened diligently, with great attention. Then he cried out like a lion : “My Lord ! I am standing continually upon the watch-tower in the daytime, and I am set in my post every night. Now behold ! here cometh a troop of men, horsemen in pairs.”

Then he answered, and said :

“Babylon is fallen ! Babylon is fallen !

“All the graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground.”

“Oh my threshing floor, and my threshed corn ! That which I have heard of the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.” (Ch. xxi. 1-10.)

The Embassy from Babylon (710 B.C.).

At this time **Merodach Baladan**, king of Babylon, sent letters, and a present to **Hezekiah** : for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered.

Now Hezekiah was pleased with them, and he showed the ambassadors the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures. There was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion that Hezekiah showed them not.

Then came Isaiah the prophet unto King Hezekiah, and said unto him, "What said these men? And whence came they unto thee?"

And Hezekiah said: "They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon."

Then said Isaiah: "What have they seen in thine house?"

And Hezekiah answered: "All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them."

Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah: "Hear the Word of the Lord of Hosts—'Behold! The days come that all that is in thine house, and what thy fathers have laid up in store until this day shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left,' saith the Lord. Of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah: "Good is the Word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken;" and he added: "There shall be peace and stability in my days."

(Ch. xxxix. 1-8.)

A second message concerning Babylon.

The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.

“Lift ye up a banner upon a high mountain ! Raise the voice unto them !

“Wave the hand to them that they may go into the gates of princes !”

I have summoned my chosen ones : I have also called my mighty ones, my proudly rejoicing ones to execute my anger. There is a noise of a multitude upon the mountains, like as of a great nation ! There is a tumultuous noise of kingdoms of nations gathered together ! The Lord of Hosts mustereth the host for the battle ! They are coming from a far-off country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord and the weapons of His indignation to destroy the whole earth.

Howl ye ! For the day of the Lord is at hand ! It cometh as destruction from the Almighty ! Then shall all hands be feeble, and every man's heart shall melt, and they shall be afraid. Pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them ! They shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth ! They shall be terrified one at another ! Their faces shall be as flames ! Behold ! The day of the Lord is coming ! A day cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the earth desolate, and sin shall be destroyed out of it. The stars of heaven, and the Orions thereof, shall not give their light. The sun shall be darkened in its rising, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. Then I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity : and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the tyrants. I will make men more scarce than fine gold—even than the pure gold of Ophir. Then will I shake the heavens, and the earth shall be removed out of its place, in the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger. And it shall be as

happens to the chased roe, and to the untended sheep, they shall turn every man to his own people, and flee every one unto his own land. Every one that is caught shall be thrust through, and every one that is overtaken shall fall by the sword. Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes: their houses shall be plundered: and their wives shall be dishonoured.

Behold! I am stirring up the **Medes** against them, who shall not regard silver, nor take delight in gold. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces, and they shall have no pity on babes: their eye shall not spare the children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the excellency of the Chaldees, shall be as Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them! It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. The Arabian shall not pitch his tent there, neither shall shepherds make their folds there: but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of hyenas: ostriches shall dwell there, and wild goats shall dance there; wolves shall howl in their desolate houses, and jackals in their pleasant palaces. Yea, her time is nearly come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

(Ch. xiii. 1-22.)

The Deliverance of Israel.

The Lord shall have mercy on Jacob, and shall once more choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. Then strangers shall join themselves to them, and they shall cleave to the House of Jacob. And the peoples shall take them, and bring them to their own place, and the House of Israel shall have them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids. They shall take captive those

whose captives they were, and they shall rule over those who oppressed them. Then it shall come to pass, in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this song against the king of Babylon, and say :—

Triumph over Babylon's Fall.

How hath the oppressor ceased ! How hath the exactress ceased !

The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked—the sceptre of the ruler.

That which smote the peoples in wrath, and that without ceasing :

That which ruled the nations in anger, and persecuted them unhindered !

The whole earth is at rest, and quiet. They break forth into singing ;

Even the fir-trees rejoice at thee—the cedars of Lebanon are saying—

“ Since thou art laid low, no feller is come up against us.”

Sheol from beneath is moved to meet thee at thy coming.

It stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth :

It raiseth up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

All of them shall answer, and say unto thee :

“ Art thou also become weak like one of us ? Art thou become like unto us ?

Is thy pomp brought down to the dust ? Where the noise of thy viols ? ”

Ah ! the worm is spread under thee, and the worms—they cover thee !

How art thou fallen from Heaven, Lucifer, Son of the morning !

How art thou cut down to the ground—thou that did'st throw nations down !

Thou saidst in thine heart, "I will ascend into heaven !

I will raise my throne above the stars of God !

I will sit upon the **mount of congregation**, in the sides of the North !

I will get above the height of the clouds—I will be like the Most High !"

Ah ! thou art brought down to Sheol—down to the sides of the grave !

They that see thee look narrowly upon thee—they consider thee, saying :

"Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that shook the kingdoms ?

That made the world a wilderness, that destroyed the cities thereof ?

Is this he who sent not his prisoners to their home ?"

All the kings of the nations, every one of them lie in glory, in their own house ;

But thou ! Thou art cast out of thy grave, like an abominable branch !

Covered with the slain ; thrust through with the sword, a carcase trodden under foot !

Thou art of those that go down to the stones of the pit, thou shalt not be joined with them in burial.

For thou hast destroyed thy land ; thou hast slain thy people.

The seed of evil-doers—it shall never be named for ever.

Prepare the slaughter-house for his children—for the guilt
of their fathers.

They shall not rise nor possess the earth, nor fill the earth
with cities.

For I am up against them, saith the Lord of Hosts.

I will cut off from Babylon the name and remnant,

Both son and grandson, saith the Lord of Hosts.

I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of
water.

With the besom of destruction will I sweep it, saith the
Lord of Hosts. (Ch. xiv. 1-23.)

PART XIII.

SONGS OF TRIUMPH—THE DIVINE VINDICATION—THE MESSIANIC KING.

Assyria's conduct rebuked.

Ah! thou that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled!

That dealest treacherously to those who were not treacherous
to thee!

When thou shalt cease spoiling, thou shalt be spoiled!

When thou ceaseest treachery, treachery shall be for thee!

O Lord! Be gracious unto us! We have waited for Thee.

Be Thou our arm every morning, in trouble our salvation.

At the noise of a tumult, the peoples fled:

At the lifting up of Thyself, the nations were scattered.

Your spoil is gathered—like the gathering of the caterpillar:

As the running to and fro of locusts, he runs upon it!

The Lord is exalted! He dwelleth on high!

He hath filled Zion with justice, and righteousness.

A store of salvation is the stability of thy times—
Wisdom and knowledge. The fear of the Lord is his
treasure !

Behold ! their valiant ones—they are crying without !
The ambassadors of peace—they are weeping bitterly !
The highways are deserted ! The travellers cease !
The treaty is broken ! Cities are despised ! He regardeth
no one !

The land mourns and fades ! Lebanon is ashamed, and
withers away !

Sharon is a desert ! Bashan and Carmel cast their leaves !

“ Now will I arise : ” saith the Lord !

“ Now will I be exalted : now will I lift up Myself !
Ye shall conceive chaff—ye shall bring forth stubble.
Your own breath, like fire, shall devour you.
The peoples shall be as the burnings of lime :
As thorns cut off shall they be burned in the fire.”

“ Hear ye that are far off, what I have done !
And ye that are near, acknowledge My might ! ”
The sinners in Zion are afraid ! The hypocrites are seized
with fear !

“ Who can dwell with the devouring fire ? Who of us with
everlasting burnings ? ”

“ He that walketh aright, that speaketh uprightly :
He that despiseth the gain of oppression—that refuseth
bribes !

That will not hear of bloodshed—that looketh not on evil !

He shall dwell on high ! Munitions of rocks shall be his
defence !

Bread shall be given him : his waters shall be sure.

Thine eyes shall see the king in beauty—the land stretching wide.”

Thine heart thinks over its alarm—“Where is the scribe?
Where the weigher of tribute? Where the counter of the
towers?”

The strange people thou shalt not see—people of an unknown
tongue,

Of a stammering tongue not understood!

Look upon Zion—the city of our feasts! Thine eyes shall
see Jerusalem

A peaceful habitation—an abiding tabernacle;

Her stakes shall never be removed, nor her cords broken.

The Lord shall there be our glory! In the place of broad
rivers and streams

No oared galley shall go—no gallant ship shall pass.

The Lord is our judge! The Lord is our Law-Giver!

The Lord is our King! He will save us!

Thy tacklings are loosed! Their mast they could not stay,
nor spread the sail.

The prey of a great spoil is divided—the lame seize the prey!

The inhabitant of the land no more sayeth—“I am sick.”

Those who dwell therein have their iniquity forgiven.

(Ch. xxxiii. 1-24.)

The terrible Day of the Lord. Against Edom.

Come near, ye nations, hear! And hearken, ye peoples!

Let the land hear, and its fulness! The world and all that
it contains!

For the wrath of the Lord is on the nations: His fury on
all their hosts!

He is utterly destroying them : He is delivering to the slaughter.

Their slain are being cast out, and their dead bodies—
The smell of them is going up : the mountains melt with their blood.

All the host of heaven is dissolved—the heavens are rolled together as a scroll.

All their host are falling down—as a falling vine leaf—a falling fig !

For My sword is bathing itself in the heavens !

Behold ! It comes down upon Edom—upon the people under curse for judgment.

The sword of the Lord is filled with blood—it is moistened with fat.

With the blood of lambs and goats—with the fat of the kidneys of rams.

For the Lord hath a sacrifice in **Bozrah**—a great slaughter in Edom's land.

Wild oxen shall be struck down with them, bullocks and bulls !

Their land shall be soaked with blood—their dust moist with fat !

For 'tis the day of the Lord's vengeance—the year of Re-compense in Zion's Cause !

Its streams are turned into pitch ; its dust becomes brimstone ;

Its land becomes burning pitch ! Burning night and day !

Its smoke shall go up for ever : for ever it shall lie waste.

None shall pass through it, for ever and ever !

The cormorant and the hedge-hog shall possess it : owls and ravens shall dwell in it.

He shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the plummet of emptiness.

To call the kingdom, nobles there shall be none : all her
princes shall be nothing.

Thorns shall come up in her palaces : nettles and brambles
in her fortresses.

It shall be an habitation of dragons—a court for owls !

The wild cats and hyenas shall meet there : the wild goat
shall cry to his fellow.

The screech owl also shall rest there—it shall find for itself
a place of rest.

There shall the arrowsnake nest, lay and hatch, and gather
in its shadow.

There shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with
her mate.

Seek ye the scroll of the Lord, and read—"None faileth,
none wants her mate,

For My Mouth—it hath commanded : My Spirit—it hath
gathered them."

He hath cast their lot : His Hand hath divided it unto them
by line.

They shall possess it for ever : from generation to genera-
tion shall they dwell therein. (Ch. xxxiv. 1-17.)

A Song of Hopeful Anticipation for God's People.

The wilderness and the parched land—they shall be glad,

The desert shall rejoice : it shall blossom, as the rose :

It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and
singing !

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, Carmel and
Sharon's excellency,

These shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our
God.

Strengthen ye the feeble hands—confirm the feeble knees.
Say to them that are of fearful heart: “Be strong! Fear
not!

Lo! Your God is coming with vengeance—your God with
recompence.

He is coming! He will save you!”

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened: deaf ears shall
be unstopped.

Then shall the lame leap as an hart: the tongue of the
dumb shall sing:—

“In the wilderness waters are breaking out—streams in the
desert!

The mirage has become a pool—the thirsty land springs
of water!

The place where jackals lay is grass, with reeds and rushes.”

An highway shall be there—a way called, “The Way of
Holiness.”

The unclean! They shall not pass over it!

God shall be for those who walk in the way—the simple
shall not err therein.

No lion shall be there; no ravenous beast shall go thereon.

But the released shall walk there; thence the ransomed of
the Lord shall return.

They shall come to Zion with songs—with everlasting joy
upon their heads.

They shall obtain joy and gladness: sorrow and sighing
shall flee away.

(Ch. xxxv. 1-10.)

The Coming King. His Character (720 B.C.).

There shall come forth a Shoot out of the stem of Jesse;
A Branch shall grow out of his roots;

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
The spirit of wisdom, and understanding, the spirit of
counsel, and might.

The spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord :
And shall make him delight in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge after the seeing of his eyes,
Neither reprove after the hearing of his ear,
But with righteousness shall he judge the poor,
And decide with equity for the meek of the earth.
He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,
With the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked,
Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,
Faithfulness the girdle of his reins. (Ch. xi. 1-5.)

The Felicity of the New Kingdom.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb—the leopard shall lie
down with the kid,

The calf, the lion's cub, and the fatling together—a little
child shall lead them,

The cow, and the bear shall feed—their young ones lying
down together,

The lion shall eat straw, like the ox,

The suckling shall play on the viper's hole—the child shall
put his hand on the adder's den.

In all My Holy Mountain—they shall not hurt nor destroy.
As the waters cover the sea, the land shall be full of the
knowledge of the Lord. (Ch. xi. 6-9.)

The Glory of David's House in a Reunited Israel.

And in that day it shall come to pass that the root of
Jesse shall stand for an ensign to the peoples : to it shall the
nations seek, and his resting-place shall be glorious. Yea,

it shall come to pass **in that day** that the Lord shall for the second time set His Hand to restore the remnant of His people—even those that are left from Assyria, and from Egypt (both from **Pathros** and from Cush), and from Elam and from **Shinar**, and from Hamath, and from the coasts of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

“The envy of Ephraim shall depart : Judah’s adversaries shall be cut off,
Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim.”

And they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines towards the west : they shall spoil those of the east together : they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea : and with His mighty wind shall He shake His hand over the River, and He shall smite it into seven streams, and make men go over dry-shod. Then there shall be an highway for the remnant of His people which shall be left from Assyria, like as there was for Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

(Ch. xi. 10-16.)

The coming King again described.

Behold ! A king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in justice ; and a great man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great Rock in a thirsty land. Then the eyes of those that see shall not be closed, and the ears of those that hear shall hearken :

the heart also of the rash shall perceive distinctly, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly. The foolish person shall be no more called noble, nor the churlish person said to be bountiful : for the foolish person speaketh folly, and his heart planneth iniquity, practising hypocrisy, and uttering error against the Lord, making empty the soul of the hungry, and causing the drink of the thirsty to fail. The purposes also of the churl are evil. He deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right ; but the noble-hearted deviseth noble things, and in noble things shall he continue. (Ch. xxxii. 1-8.)

The Song of the Restored People.

And **in that day** thou shalt say :—

I will praise Thee, O Lord ! Thou wast angry with me !

But Thine anger is turned away. Thou comfortedst me !

Lo ! God is my salvation : I will trust and not fear.

Jah the Lord is my strength and song. He is become my salvation.

Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

And **in that day** shall ye say :—

Give thanks to the Lord. Call upon His Name !

Declare His doings among the people : tell that His Name is exalted !

Sing unto the Lord : for He hath done excellent things—

This make known in all the earth.

Cry aloud and shout, thou that inhabitest Zion !

For great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee !

(Ch. xii. 1-6.)

PART XIV.

PROPHECIES DEALING WITH A GREAT DIVINE
INTERPOSITION.**A dark Outlook on approaching Judgment.**

Behold ! The Lord maketh the land empty ! He maketh it waste !

He turneth it upside down ! He scattereth abroad its inhabitants !

And it shall be—as with the people, so with the priest :

As with the servant, so with his master : as with the maid, so with her mistress :

As with the buyer, so with the seller : as with the lender, so with the borrower :

As with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

The land shall be utterly emptied ! It shall be utterly spoiled !

For the Lord hath spoken—even this word.

The land shall mourn, it shall fade away ! The world shall languish and fade !

The rulers of the people of the land do languish !

The land is defiled by the people thereof ! They have transgressed the laws !

They have changed the ordinances—broken the everlasting covenant !

Therefore hath the curse devoured the land—its people are desolate !

Therefore the inhabitants of the land are burned—few men are left !

The wine-fruit mourneth ! The vine fadeth ! The merry-hearted sigh !

The mirth of timbrels ceaseth ! The noise of joy endeth !
The joy of the harp ceaseth !

They shall not drink wine with a song ! Strong drink shall be bitter to those who drink it.

Broken down is the city—a chaos ! Every house is shut up
—no man cometh in !

In the country—a crying for wine ; all joy is darkened, the land's mirth is gone !

In the city there is left desolation ! The gate is smitten with destruction !
(Ch. xxiv. 1-12.)

The Promise for the Remnant.

When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the grape gleanings, when the vintage is done. These shall lift up their voice, they shall shout : for the majesty of the Lord they shall cry aloud from the sea—"O glorify ye the Lord in the rising of the sun,—the name of the Lord God of Israel in the coasts of the sea."

From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even "Glory to the Righteous."

But I said :

For me is wasting away, wasting away ! Woe is me !

Oppressors are dealing in treachery : oppressors deal very treacherously !

Fear, the pit, the snare are on thee, O inhabitant of the land.

He who fleeth from the report of the fear, falleth into the pit ;

He that cometh up from the pit is taken in the snare !

The windows of heaven are open ! Earth's foundations do shake !

The earth is all broken down—it is clean dissolved.

The earth is moved exceedingly ! It staggers

Like a drunken man ! As a hammock it swings to and fro !

Its evil lies heavy on it : it falls : it rises again no more !

The Divine Vindication.

But it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall judge the host of the high ones in high places, even the kings of the world on the earth, and they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the dungeon, and shut up in the prison : and after many days shall they be punished. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun shall be ashamed : for the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and in the presence of His Elders in glory. (Ch. xxiv. 13-23.)

A Hymn of sublime confidence in Jehovah.

O Lord, my God ! I will exalt Thee : I will praise Thy Name !

Thou hast done wonderfully ! Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth !

Thou hast made of a city—a heap : of a defenced city—a ruin !

A palace of strangers—to be no city ; it shall never be built.

The strong shall glorify Thee : the city of terrible nations shall fear Thee !

Thou hast been a strength to the poor—a strength to the needy in distress.

A refuge from storm ! A shade from heat ! The blast of the terrible ones was like a storm against the wall.

Thou hast brought down the noise of strangers, as heat on a parched place.

As heat with the shadow of a cloud—the branch of the terrible is laid low.

In this Mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all His people a feast of fat things,

A feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow—wines on the lees well refined.

In this Mountain He shall destroy the covering of the people, And the web which is woven over all the nations.

He shall swallow up death for ever : the Lord God shall wipe tears from every face.

His people's reproach—He shall remove it from off all the land !

The Lord hath spoken.

In that day shall it be said :

Lo ! This is our God ! We have waited for Him :

He will save us ! This is the Lord !

We have waited for Him ! We will be glad :

We will rejoice in His salvation. (Ch. xxv. 1-9.)

The Doom of Moab.

For in this Mountain shall the Hand of the Lord rest, and Moab shall be trodden down in his place, even as straw is trodden down in the water of the dunghill : and he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of it, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim, but he shall lay low his pride together with the skill of his hands. And the fortress of the high fort of his walls shall He lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust. (Ch. xxv. 10-12.)

Judah's Song of Triumph.

In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah :—
Ours is a strong city ! For walls and outworks is salvation
appointed !

Open ye the gates ! Let a righteous nation that keepeth
faith, enter in !

A purpose firmly fixed Thou dost keep—Peace,

Perfect peace to those whose trust is in Thee !

In the Lord, trust for ever ! Jah the Lord is an abiding
Rock !

The high ones, He bringeth them down :

The lofty city, He layeth it low, He layeth it low with the
ground :

He bringeth it even to the dust, it is trodden down

By the foot of the poor, under the steps of the weak.

The way of the just—'tis a right way. Thou directest his
path aright.

Yea, in the way of Thy judgments, O Lord, we have waited
for Thee.

The desire of our soul is to Thy Name : and for Thy
remembrance !

With my soul have I desired Thee by night : my spirit seeks
Thee in the morning,

For when Thy judgments are on the earth, the inhabitants
of the world will learn righteousness.

Let favour be shewed to the wicked—he learneth not
righteousness,

In a land of uprightness he deals unjustly—he beholds not
the majesty of the Lord.

O Lord, Thy Hand has been lifted up—they do not see it.

They shall see, and be ashamed. Thy zeal for the people—
Yea, Thy fire shall devour Thine enemies?

Lord! Thou wilt ordain peace for us! Thou hast wrought
all our works for us!

O Lord our God! Other lords beside Thee have had
dominion over us.

Only through Thy help can we praise Thy Name.

The dead do not live! The deceased—they rise not
again!

Thou hast visited, and destroyed them: Thou hast made
all their memory to perish.

Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord! Thou hast
increased the nation!

Thou art glorified! Thou hast enlarged all the bounds of
the land!

Lord! in trouble they looked to Thee: they prayed when
Thy chastening was on them.

Like as a woman with child, drawing near the time of her
delivery;

She is in pain—she crieth out in her pangs: so have we
been before Thee, O Lord.

We have been with child: we have been in pain: we brought
forth as it were wind.

We wrought no deliverance in the land; neither have men
been born.

Thy dead shall live! My dead bodies shall arise!

Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust!

Thy dew is a dew of lights! The earth shall cast forth
the dead!

(Ch. xxvi. 1-19.)

An Exhortation to Prayer and Trust.

Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut
thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little mo-

ment, until the indignation have passed by. For behold ! the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth shall disclose her bloodshed, and no more cover her slain. In that day the Lord with His sore, and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the swift serpent, and leviathan the crooked serpent, and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

The Song of the Lord's Vineyard.

In that day sing ye unto her of the vineyard of red wine:—
I the Lord do keep it : I water it every moment,
Lest any hurt it, I do keep it night and day.
Fury have I none ! Were briers and thorns set against Me !
In battle would I go against them : I would burn them all
up.

Or else take hold of My Strength, and make peace with Me !
He shall cause those that come of Jacob to take root :
Israel shall blossom, and bud : they shall cover the earth
with fruit.

Hath He smitten him, as He smote those that smote him ?
Was he slain, as those that slew him, were slain ?
In measure, by sending her away, Thou contendest with
her.

He hath scared her with His rough blast in the day of His
east wind.

In this way Jacob's iniquity is purged.

This shall be the fruit of taking away his sin.

When he maketh all his altar stones like broken chalk
stones ;

When all the Asherim, and sun-images shall rise no more.

The defenced city shall be desolate—the home forsaken,
and desert-like,

There shall calves feed, and lie : they shall eat the trees thereof.

When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off,

The women shall come, and set them on fire.

For it is not a people of understanding.

Their Maker pities them not : their Creator favours them not. (Ch. xxvi. 20, 21 ; xxvii. 1-11.)

A Promise of Restoration.

And it shall come to pass **in that day** that the Lord shall beat out His corn from the channel of the River (Euphrates) unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye Children of Israel : and it shall come to pass **in that day** that a great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come, even those that were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the Holy mountain in Jerusalem. (Ch. xxvii. 12, 13.)

DIVISION II.

THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH READ IN THEIR HISTORICAL SETTING, WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES.

PART I.

(Pp. 11-14.)

THE HISTORICAL CONDITIONS OF THE PROPHET'S MINISTRY,
AND ITS DURATION.

THE opening verse of the book of the prophecies of Isaiah, as it lies before us, gives us the information we seek about the time during which the prophet lived and flourished. His ministry began just as King Uzziah was closing his reign. This sovereign had had a long, and for many years an illustrious career: but his prosperity had passed under a cloud, and he ended his days in darkness. During the latter years of his reign the powers of government had been entrusted to his son Jotham, as regent. Now in the year that Uzziah died, and Jotham became king—at a time when the earthly throne of Jerusalem was losing one and receiving another occupant—Isaiah received his vision of the heavenly Throne filled with its perpetual occupant, and surrounded by its transcendent glory. With this vision of the King, the Lord of Hosts enthroned in glory, Isaiah received his call to office. The exact year of this important event is not absolutely determined: it lies between 742 and 740. The sad close of Uzziah's reign, and the absence of any outstanding quality in the character of Jotham, that might give

the promise of good things, would certainly very deeply impress the people and the prophet alike with the imperfections of even a Davidic king. During the half century of Uzziah's reign Jerusalem had enjoyed a large measure of prosperity—indications of which the prophet gives in his earliest prophecies (p. 17)—but a prosperity which brought the people into perilous relations with the idolatrous tribes of the East. Both on the part of the king and the nation, there followed that overweening confidence in human resources, success so often brings about: and their hearts were lifted up in rebellion against God. The claims and prerogatives of Jehovah were forgotten and dishonoured: the worship of Jehovah was largely departed from; and leprosy seized the king, while indifferentism dulled the people's religious sensibilities. In such circumstances Isaiah spent his youth: to lift up his voice on behalf of Jehovah, and to protest against all indifferentism was he called forth. And this just as Jotham assumes full kingly authority—a man whose life was marked by no great sin, nor by any signal act of devotion to Jehovah. "He entered not into the Temple of the Lord." The people continued unrestrained and unrebuked; still they did corruptly. The king performed no act of reparation to Jehovah. He simply abstained from Uzziah's great sin. Jotham's reign was, however, one of external prosperity. But with his death a crisis is brought about in the history of the people of Judah by the accession of an openly idolatrous king like unto Ahab, even Ahaz. Great activity characterised Isaiah during this sad reign, when the divine honour was so much called in question. Ahaz reigned about fourteen years, and during that time the prophet passed through varied experiences. Although he played at first a most conspicuous part in

fully and faithfully declaring the mind and will of Jehovah to the king, and condemning his foreign alliances and sinful fear, yet in the later years the prophet, rejected by the court, must have been largely living in retirement, labouring among his disciples, and waiting for the morning. This came with its brightening dawn in the death-year of Ahaz, when a king of noble promise, a friend and pupil of the prophet's own, a true Davidic king, ascended the throne of his father. This year of Hezekiah's succession, consequently, is marked by another glorious manifestation of prophetic activity. The night's weeping was now over, and the joy of the morning encouraged the prophet to appear once more before the public, to utter messages concerning all the immediate neighbours of Jerusalem, and very especially concerning that great Northern Empire, which, like a mighty wave, was now sweeping everything—every human resistance—before it. The great question was at that time being asked, “What then shall one answer the messengers of the nation?” Ambassadors from all parts would doubtless come with many inquiries to Jerusalem concerning the future. To the prophet these would be referred: and his answer in God's great Name was one of hope and confidence: “The Lord hath founded Zion and in her shall the afflicted of His people take refuge.” But surrounded as Hezekiah was by courtiers trained in the time-serving school of Ahaz—men wholly incapable of seeing what the prophet saw, or of acting as the prophet enjoined—he found himself entangled in endless complications, and notably in the matter of an alliance with Egypt. Isaiah pointed out to Hezekiah that his duty was to regard Jehovah as his salvation and all his desire, urging that even from a worldly point of view the safety of Jerusalem lay in a policy

of absolute neutrality. The great issues of the world's secular history were then being fought out by three great World-Powers—Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt. Jerusalem had been chosen by Jehovah as His throne, and entrusted with the highest of trusts—even the preservation of a pure religion and a Messianic Hope. She would only drag her sacred trust into the mire if she allied with any of these powers: and bring upon herself the dire vengeance of the power she slighted. Geographically, too, she was so situated as to remain safe in her limited territory and mountain citadel; she could calmly see the wave of war pass by without its even touching her, if she were willing. But foolishly, nay wickedly,—for it was in distinct disobedience to the divine command declared by Isaiah,—she came down into the arena of a human diplomacy, and lost her supreme trust in God. This grieved Isaiah much: but he was divinely sustained, for he was commanded to proclaim that Assyria would not overthrow Jerusalem. However near this power should come—even at the very gates it would be overthrown. And this great and signal victory Isaiah saw with his own eyes. Once already Sargon had devastated the provinces in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign; and yet once again a mighty host under a yet mightier monarch, Sennacherib, with yet greater parade and boast, gather some ten years later for the capture of Jehovah's city. It was in vain. Jehovah was still a wall of fire around His people, and in some measure still the glory in their midst. Soon after Hezekiah dies: and in the strange, but only too common alternation of events, a wicked king succeeds a righteous one. Isaiah's hopes seem suddenly dashed to the ground: but even out of the very ashes, Phoenix-like, he rises. And God uses him in his old age to

sing so beautifully about the coming day of deliverance. But such a man was a marked man. Hence, when Manasseh caused Jerusalem to swim with the blood of the saints (2 Kings xxi. 16), it is only too sadly possible that the prophet met a martyr's death. His work, however, was done, and well done. For fifty years he had served his generation faithfully.

PART II.

(Pp. 15-16.)

THE MAN AND HIS MESSAGE (770-690 B.C.).

The Call, Consecration, and Commission of the Prophet.

Within ten years of the foundation of Rome, Isaiah the son of Amoz was called to deliver his message concerning Jerusalem and Judah. Nothing is told us about the lineage or birth-place of the prophet. In this case, as so often, the man becomes subordinate to his Message : and our concern is a great deal more with the work done than with the worker. But, undoubtedly, the kingly demeanour of the prophet, and his acknowledged influence in the royal court, especially in connection with the instruction of Hezekiah, point to his being of the royal family, as tradition indeed affirms. Jerusalem, the sphere of his life-long ministry, was probably his birth-place, as it was also the place of his martyrdom. While his contemporary in the prophet's office, Micah, laboured in the provinces for the most part, Isaiah brought his heroic faith, his earnest purpose, his eloquent words, and his divinely-given insight into the future, to bear upon the very heart of his nation. Impressed with the events attending the closing years of Uzziah, and saddened by his death, this young man of noble birth and

bright promise, enters the Temple Courts. There he receives that Vision of God that becomes to him a Call, and a Consecration to his new life's duty. We have in his own words a deeply interesting account of this starting-point in his ministry—an account which, undoubtedly, written later than his earliest prophecies (and therefore thus placed in our Bible), coloured also perhaps by some reflections occasioned by the unwillingness of the people to hear his first message, must yet come first if we would read his prophecies aright.

That day when he entered the Temple Courts was his spiritual birthday. That day certain fundamental religious truths were revealed to him, and appreciated by him in such a way that they influenced him to his latest hour, and directed all his utterances. Prominent among those is that of Jehovah's supremacy as King on His Throne. The thought of a divine Sovereignty—of a throne in the Heavens never empty—now deeply touched Isaiah. The glory of this King in His heavenly temple, Isaiah saw, and saw never to forget. The rule of this King over all nations, even over boastful Assyria, the prophet henceforward and always firmly proclaimed. This was one of his secrets. His King was Eternal, All-glorious, and All-powerful. But, again, the absolutely perfect character of the divine Holiness is now also recognised by Isaiah. To the prophet the divine supremacy was not one of power merely, it was also one of holiness, and this foundation idea he could firmly place in contrast to the ideas on which heathen empires were founded. In the light of this truth his own personal demerit appears in the strongest measure: his sense of utter unfitness for the service of One so holy: the necessity of a divine interposition for the purging away of human sin

becomes manifest. Then comes upon him the deep sense that this act of grace has taken place in his own personal experience there and then : and that he is now definitely called upon to enter upon this service. The whole thing seems to be done before his very eyes. He *sees* God : he *sees* the angel : he *sees* the hot stone from the altar hearth : and he knows himself a *called* man. The seeing of God is immediately followed by the hearing of the Voice divine : an *opened eye* is accompanied by an *unstopped ear*. Actually, then, Isaiah, by solemn purpose, consecrates himself to a work to which God now called him. The strength necessary for such an act of consecration comes through the consciousness of the divine call : he gives himself resolutely to his new service, because God had called him to it. He places himself at the divine disposal, because he knew of the divine acceptance. And then comes the divine Commission—a Commission which is never given save to one who unreservedly places himself, body, soul, and spirit, at the divine disposal—to think, speak, and act as God shall supremely direct. The character of the Commission deserves attention. There is in it a remarkable combination of hopelessness, and hopefulness. For while the people are to hear the message, they—*i.e.*, the great majority of them—are to become hardened in the process : the religious sense, which refuses to listen to the prophet, is to become dulled in consequence. And as the prophet sees such a work going on—as he shall see judgment still further spreading desolation in the land—he is alarmed at the results of his mission. His preaching was to be so largely a harbinger of a day of punishment. But not entirely : and of this hopeful aspect of his work, his name itself was to be continually a standing memorial. Just as later on, the names of his

sons were to embody and express the great truths that he proclaimed to Ahaz, so now his own name was fitted to remind him and his people that Jehovah was his salvation. This the word Isaiah means, for it is compounded of two Hebrew words, meaning the salvation of Jehovah. Without this thought becoming emphasised, there would have been an element lacking in his commission. But it is here: and nothing became dearer to the prophet—nothing more characteristic of his preaching than the salvation of the remnant. The leaves may fall, and the tree even be cut down to the ground, but it would flourish yet again. So the covenant-people might pass through a season of prolonged chastisement, they might reach the lowest ebb of fortune, and yet out of their midst would return with purified hearts, and purged lives, the remnant—God's elect ones, who would serve Him in newness of life. And thus this solemn season with its revelations ended. Thus was Isaiah launched upon his glorious life-career. Thus did he become the proclaimer of the *Sovereignty*, *Holiness*, and *Covenant faithfulness* of Jehovah God—three great themes which he kept well and continuously before king and people. Against earthly might he stands in Jehovah's strength, and against unworthy confidences his trust is in the salvation of the Lord.

PART III.

(Pp. 16-25.)

THE EARLIER PREACHING OF ISAIAH IN THE REIGN OF
JOTHAM, AND THE FIRST YEAR OF AHAZ CONCERNING
THE STATE OF JUDAH AND JERUSALEM (742-736 B.C.).

And now Isaiah begins his ministry. His first message is one that bases itself on the promise of the latter-day glory—but as he shows, a promise that can only find its realisation in conditions of holiness—conditions which were all absent in Jerusalem and Judah then. The passages that are gathered together in this section are continuous, and together form one homogeneous whole. Probably we have in these passages the heads and main points of a number of prophetic announcements, delivered not on one day or successive days, but during several years. And these have been summarised for us by the prophet himself, or one of his disciples, and written down in what was the first book or collection of Isaiah's prophecies. The value of this collection lies in this, that it shows us the prophet's attitude to Jerusalem on his first appearance, and his appreciation of the circumstances of his time.

His ministry opens with a great text. Micah preaches from the same text. From this we may legitimately gather that both these contemporary prophets quote from an older prophet. As popular preachers eager to reach the popular conscience, they lay hold on some well-known sentence, which, like this now before us, contained the great hope of the Jewish nation. The covenant given to David, well "ordered in all things and sure," gave them the hope of a glorious city, which should be the religious centre of the

world, and the supreme arbiter of the destinies of nations. That such a state of things should come, all believed : but the practical question was, How could this be brought about? Isaiah, like Jeremiah after him, had to protest against trust in lying words—against any false assurance that the conditions of the covenant were already present, or any premature attempt to anticipate the promise.

The text is quoted. Then comes the exhortation to the House of Judah to enter into the divine fellowship,—an exhortation implying, what is immediately stated, that Judah had fallen out of this fellowship by compromise with idolatry. The prosperity of Uzziah's reign had not been an unmixed gain. Commercial intercourse with the heathen had broken down the lines of religious separation. The prophet boldly proclaims the old faith of Jerusalem, even the supremacy of Jehovah, and the nothingness of idols. He tells men of the day of Jehovah, a day in which the glory of Jehovah shall be seen in a work of vindication of righteousness, which should have a universal sweep. Everything wherein man had been putting his trust,—everything which had thereby been detracting from the honour due to Jehovah,—must be seen in its insignificance. The folly of all trust in man, or in any human resource, is declared : the utter helplessness of all mortal help is shown. Before, then, the latter-day glory shall come, many things must happen.

This leads the prophet to enter upon a long and detailed indictment of the people.

And here we have first of all a general statement of the evil condition of things—a sadly eloquent message addressed to ruler and subject alike. This is Jehovah's controversy with His people—His complaint, that they have turned their backs upon Him, and broken all His laws. But to bring

guilt home to every rank and condition, to both sexes alike, to every conscience, the prophet details eight sins in order. Upon seven of these he pronounces solemn woes—on the eighth, which comes first, he dwells at length. These eight sins are—luxury in dress, land covetousness, the drink sin with abandonment to amusement, indifference, moral perversity with its ignoring of the distinctions of right and wrong, conceit, corruption with drunkenness, oppression with unjust legislation. The prophet sees all these sins rampant in Jerusalem: and he declares their removal to be necessary before this city could be a centre of religion for the world. Very graphically he describes God's anger resting upon His people, as he sees the divine Hand stretched out over the land in six successive judgments—that Hand *still stretched out*, for so great was Judah's unwillingness to give up her sin that in spite of judgment upon judgment, she had still continued in her evil ways. It is instructive to mark these successive judgments—all of which are sent in warning—all for remedial ends. First came a plague upon their crops and fruits, upon root and blossom—the result being famine and exposed carcasses. Secondly, the Syrians and Philistines attacked the land: hostile armies plundered the country. Ephraim was the first to know the terrible nature of such invasions: but this buffer being removed, the whole brunt of attack soon fell upon Judah. Thirdly, the leaders of the land were cut off: they were indeed misleaders of the people, and the Lord could have no delight in them. Fourthly came internecine strife, when was seen deadly enmity between Ephraim and Judah, leading to most sad results. While fifthly, a terrible visitation from the North is declared, by which the prophet plainly foretells the Assyrian invasions. And then the prophet

announces, sixthly, a final and great judgment, and as it fills his mind, he is impressed with its terrible features, which he portrays, seeking if by any means he may wean his loved people from sin, and so ward off this awful blow.

Were this only done—were there only a great national repentance, a better day might dawn speedily. He hopes and prays for this. For the prophet is assured in his heart of hearts that after the severe judgments that must come, there will be a day of glory for the remnant. The spirit of burning must do its work, and then a ransomed people—a people chosen as heirs of life, shall be holiness unto the Lord. All that had been expressed by the Shekinah cloud, and pillar of fire in the wilderness wanderings shall be experienced again in its fulness. Jehovah, Judah's only Salvation, now honoured and obeyed, shall be the glory of His people. They will have in Him a divine and adequate protection from every foe.

And now, finally, he sings his song of God's vineyard. Under this beautiful figure—a figure used by our Lord Himself for a similar purpose—the prophet tells of privileges conferred in grace upon Judah, the vine-plant in which God had taken delight. The covenant embodies this foundation idea of a divine interest in a chosen people: but it lays that people in return under special obligation to give loving service. In this, Jerusalem had grievously failed. God came seeking fruit, and found none, nay, He found wild fruit. He looked for justice, but saw injustice: for right, but saw might, to translate the prophet's forcible play upon words here.

In this way the prophet works out the theme with which he had begun. Only in this way does he believe and teach that the promise of the covenant will be realized.

PART IV.

(Pp. 26-29.)

THE HISTORY OF KING AHAZ, HIS IDOLATRIES, AND HIS
FORBIDDEN INTERCOURSE WITH ASSYRIA.

With the accession of Ahaz a dark day, with an eclipse of all shining, casts its deepening shadows over the land, and Isaiah is roused to an increasing activity in his proclamation of his supreme policy of trust in Jehovah alone. For about fourteen years Ahaz reigned (736-722 B.C.). The name of this king was really Jehoahaz: but as his conduct was so much out of harmony with words which mean "one whom Jehovah holds fast," the first part of the name was dropt. Thus this king stands before us as one who had forsaken Jehovah, and who held fast in his own perverseness to his own way. His conduct was like that of Ahab, the king of Israel, who introduced foreign idolatries into Samaria. And even as Elijah was sent by God to face this king, so was Isaiah now especially qualified to confront Ahaz.

Many and divers forms of false worship were now patronised by Judah's king: he brought in the abomination of the heathen nations around, such as the cruel rites of Moloch in which children passed through the fire in that valley, fitly called the valley of the children of groaning, which was afterwards made a place of refuse for the city, and with its perpetually burning fires a type of the severest form of condemnation (Matt. v. 22). The High places were now used for false worship, and under every green tree incense was burned. This course of wickedness was soon visited with punishment. Syria and Samaria were at

this time in league, and Judah found some of her bravest sons carried away into captivity—these powers treating Jerusalem as they were so soon themselves to be treated by Assyria. The seaport of Elath at the head of the Gulph of Akabah, whence ships had traded with the remotest places during Uzziah's reign, fell into Pekah's hands : and thus her commerce, which, however, had only been an entanglement to Judah, was greatly curbed.

In such circumstances Ahaz adopted a supremely worldly diplomacy. He entered into negotiations with the powerful king of Assyria, who was only too eager to secure a footing in the affairs of Palestine. A most humiliating message is sent to Nineveh, as Ahaz piteously invokes Tiglath Pileser's help against the combined armies of Samaria and Syria. In this measure Ahaz turned his back upon Jehovah, and desecrated the Temple to purchase aid. Thus he breaks with the best traditions of David's House. But worse things soon followed. The pattern of a heathen altar is sent to Jerusalem, and a time-serving priest condescends to erect such an altar in the House of Jehovah. In this case the civil power intrudes into the most sacred matters, ordering the daily sacrifices to be offered on this high altar instead of on the brazen altar made after "the pattern showed in the mount." Well would it have been for Ahaz had another priest more like unto him, who rebuked Uzziah, been at the altar now : well would it have been for the king had he been stayed now by some signal judgment, and prevented from bringing further disgrace on Jerusalem, and greater dishonour on Jehovah's name. But he is allowed to go on in his evil way. The foolish compliance of ecclesiastical authority is the doom of the civil power.

Soon a very important event happened—an event which

was surely coming when the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, became a fixed and irreparable habit of Ephraim's life. The Ten Tribes now cease to be a kingdom. In vain had Amos the prophet warned them: in vain had Hosea pled with them. They hearkened not; their day of grace quickly passed away. The king of Assyria had found his way into Samaria in response to the foolish request of Ahaz: and once there, he came again. When Tiglath died, his successor, Shalmaneser, came to conquer first Syria, and then Samaria—two successive events which in distinctest language we shall find the prophet Isaiah foretelling to Ahaz, as he pointed out to him the utter groundlessness of his fear of these two smoking torches—these two played-out powers. The capture of Damascus took place in 732 B.C., and the capture of Samaria ten years later, in 722 B.C. And thus warning loud enough was given to Jerusalem as to the issue of idolatry. Thus, too, all intervening obstacles between Judah and Assyria were swept away, and Jerusalem lay open to the vengeance of Assyria, should she, in any moment of caprice, give offence to the proud king of Nineveh. The warning has a special importance. For it should clearly have proved to Judah that any negotiations with Egypt—for this was the sin of Hoshea the last king of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes—would most certainly bring down the vengeance of Assyria. At this time Egypt was the great rival power of Nineveh, disputing with her the lordship of the known world. The Pharaoh who now reigned was called Shabak, a name which occurs in shorter form in our Bible as So, king of Egypt. In the year 720 B.C. disorder ensued in that country in consequence of a victory gained by Assyria over this king, at Raphia. This vengeance fell now on Egypt for the part

of sympathy she had shown towards the various tributary powers of Palestine, who were rebelling against Shalmaneser. On this occasion Ahaz saw clearly what Assyria could do, and would only be too ready to repeat in similar circumstances. So that in this way the loud and repeated warning against any negotiations with Egypt received ocular support, and should have impressed itself upon the rulers and counsellors of Jerusalem. That it did not do so we shall see later on. During the reign of Ahaz, however, the policy of an alliance with Assyria remained. Ahaz continued in the relation of a tributary power to Nineveh, and on his best behaviour towards Assyria. Judah's fair name was thus lost, her religious rites tampered with, and her trust in Jehovah abandoned.

The way of transgressors, however, is hard ; and no gain came to Ahaz from his diplomacy. The sacred Chronicler shows us a man at his wits' end, tossed about from one imaginary deity to another, never finding rest. The gods of Syria smote him : and the god of Assyria was only biding his time. He had forsaken Jehovah, the fountain of living water.

It is most probable that during the last years of his reign his son Hezekiah was co-regent : upon this prince the hopes of the prophet and people were now resting.

The end of this king came without regret : and he did not receive honourable burial in the royal burying-place. In view of the reforming spirit which Isaiah was fostering, and Hezekiah had already patronized, we cannot doubt that Ahaz died "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung." He had proved himself false to all the best traditions of David's House.

PART V.

(Pp. 30-35.)

THE PROPHECIES ADDRESSED TO AHAZ, CONDEMNATORY
OF HIS NEGOTIATIONS AND ALLIANCE WITH
ASSYRIA (734 B.C.).

In our last part the historical circumstances of the reign of Ahaz were stated; now the prophetic announcements of the great prophet concerning this king come before us. The value and importance of the services of Isaiah will be clearly recognised and duly appreciated only when they are considered in distinct connection with the events of his time. For God's prophets have always been primarily charged to declare the mind and will of God concerning the actual facts of the history, in which their lot was cast: while their commission to foretell the programme of coming days lay in this, that they were men who, seeing God, viewed all history from the divine standpoint, and in the light of eternal principles. However much more was involved in their commission, this at least was. Their definite declarations of the divine will arose out of particular facts then present, and their forecastings of brighter days followed their grasping of a divine purpose of grace working itself out in successive generations.

Soon after Ahaz ascended the throne he found himself confronted with a Syro-Ephraimite war. The two kings, Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, Remaliah's son, king of Israel, joined their forces against Judah. The reason of this war is not stated: but from the desire of those kings to dethrone Ahaz, and place on the throne in Jerusalem another, even Ben-Tabeel, it may be inferred that Ahaz refused to join these two powers in a general rising against

Assyria. Obviously, Ahaz was well advised in not taking a step of such decided opposition to Nineveh: for had he done so, the legions of that empire would only have spread desolation in Judah twenty or thirty years earlier than they did. To a certain extent, the policy commended by Isaiah was adopted: Ahaz did not take up his stand against Assyria. The prophet, of course, wanted more. For he urged an absolute and complete neutrality, in which Ahaz would have nothing at all to do with this power. So far as Ahaz acted on the prophet's advice, he was successful: for this confederacy against Jerusalem proved a failure.

To Isaiah, however, the state of panic into which Jerusalem had fallen was saddening; and he is sent by God to meet the king in the most public manner, and rebuke this fear. The prophet takes with him his son, who bore such a significant name. The prophecy in connection with which this son was named is not extant, unless we find it in the closing words of ch. vi. (p. 16). That such a one was delivered is a natural assumption, and in harmony with Isaiah's procedure. For he utters first his prophecy, and then to give perpetual testimony to his firm belief in that prophecy, he names his son: and the son thus named becomes to Judah a sign and a wonder from the Lord of Hosts, a standing testimony to the nation, and an abiding memorial to the prophet. The prophecy of the salvation, or return of the remnant, now visibly represented in Shear-Jashub, told of Isaiah's calm confidence in the future of God's chosen people, and in the safety and security of Jerusalem. This chosen remnant would be the ten good men, who would for the time ward off the blow of complete destruction. (Gen. xviii. 32.) It is with this son that Isaiah now confronts the king: and the burden of his message is

to teach trust in God, and to show the vanity of the confederacy, which he so much fears. For he assures Ahaz that within a few brief years, both these confederate powers will be crushed. They, therefore, can have no power to inflict damage—they are played-out powers, burning-out torches. Of this last flash in the pan the prophet speaks only with contempt: and their end was even nearer than the prophet said. Syria had not more than four years to run her course now: Samaria only fourteen.

There is a wonderfully suggestive declaration made by the prophet in the words as in the A.V., "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." There is a very powerful combination of related and similarly sounding words—very frequent in Isaiah—in the verse before us: the verb of the one clause leading up to the verbal form of the second. And the close connection between a human holding fast to God, and the divine holding fast of man is thus emphasized. He, who holds fast to God, will be held fast by Him. And to Ahaz thus the prophet speaks: "If you, O king, hold fast to God and to His word as now declared by me, His prophet, then most assuredly you will be held fast by Him." The principle of true permanence is here shown to be a holding of divine truth. "He who confides in God will abide:" or to quote another, "He who has faith will have staith—*i.e.*, standing." The secular principle of diplomacy and conduct, which Ahaz adopted, ignores God. The true principle of all activity, which Isaiah enjoins, recognises dependence on God, and conformity to His will, as all-essential in life and conduct.

The second prophetic message to Ahaz gathers around the beautiful word Immanuel, which for Christians has now sublimest associations as the name so fitly expressive of the

true Incarnate One,—God thus becoming One with Man in the highest and completest sense. But the word in its earliest use expressed only the thought of God being *on the side of His people*; and this Isaiah now emphasizes in the presence of the unbelieving king. In confirmation of this prophecy it is believed by some that Isaiah named one of his own sons Immanuel, as he had already called one Shear-Jashub, and was soon to call a third Maher-shalal Hash-Baz.* After having repeatedly assured the king that he could rely on the divine help, and having as often received the king's refusal to accept this assurance, he then says, I will in God's name give you a sign. I will name my next son Immanuel, and he shall be to you a living monument of my firm and unalterable faith that God is with us. And before this son shall reach the years of discretion the armies of Assyria shall have destroyed both Ephraim and Syria. Now both these events happened very speedily, as we have seen. But when all this shall happen, a terrible danger, in comparison with which the present danger will not deserve to be mentioned, shall menace David's royal House. In graphic words the prophet then goes on to delineate the awful desolation that is coming, when by the foolish policy of ignoring Jehovah and entering into diplomatic relations with worldly powers, Jerusalem was to be involved in the struggle between Egypt and Assyria. Had another course been adopted, Judah might have looked calmly on, an interested but untouched spectator. For the Church of Christ,

* The prophet certainly points to some mother, some married woman who should shortly have a son : but critics differ greatly as to who this person was. The word does not necessarily mean a virgin. This Immanuel was to be a sign to unbelieving Ahaz, and in the Messianic reference the essential point to emphasize is that Jesus was a divinely-given *Sign* to an unbelieving generation.

represented by Jerusalem, need only be concerned about the triumph of principle, and may remain perfectly indifferent as to what Empire may be at any time the paramount power. Neither from Egypt nor from Assyria could she get what she wanted. This could come only from Jehovah.

In his third message to Ahaz the certainty of the overthrow of Samaria and Syria is confirmed in another very striking sign, even the naming of another son. Four words, or rather two sentences, form now the burden of this message : and they are embodied in the name of a boy. MAHERSHALAL ;—this first sentence means that quickly shall trophies be taken—the prophet thus seeing the army of Samaria in full and disgraceful flight : while HASH-BAZ, the second, tells us about booty being taken, as the Assyrian forces shall enter Damascus in 732 B.C. and help themselves to its wealth.

Thus on three separate occasions—these at least, perhaps oftener—Isaiah had urged upon Ahaz the duty of warding off the present attacks without any undue concern or anxiety. But on his refusal thus to view the prospects of his neighbours, and on his deliberate determination to call in the aid of Assyria to crush them, Isaiah comes with a fourth message to this unbelieving king. Already an alliance with Assyria had been formed ; and this was a formal rejection of Jehovah whose invisible, but ever-present protection of Jerusalem is symbolised by the waters of the pool of Siloam, “the river that makes glad the city of God.” Ahaz had now made his irrevocable choice, and sealed his destiny. Many of his counsellors had favoured a general or triple alliance against Assyria, putting thus their confidence in Rezin and Remaliah’s son : they likewise, though in a different way, turned their back upon God. Hence to king and people the

prophet comes to declare a great Assyrian invasion, which shall overthrow all alliances ; and against which there could be only one barrier, one already deliberately rejected, even the accepted Arm of Jehovah, as commended by Isaiah's policy. Every confederacy, the prophet declares, will be vain against those who accept God's protection ; in no confederacy, save in one with Jehovah, should Jerusalem trust. So that if even yet Ahaz could turn round, and rely upon the covenant relationship of Jehovah, he might laugh at the power of Assyria, calmly saying, "God is with us."

This, however, Ahaz stubbornly refuses to do, and the prophet, silenced at court, turns homewards, placing his testimony in writing, rolling it up, and handing it over to his disciples. He has now to wait on God till these calamities be past ; until a new king ascend the throne, and a new course of policy commend itself to the people, who shall have by that time seen the folly of trusting in "man's son, in whom there is no stay." This temporary retirement of the prophet from the court would not be for more than ten years, if for so long : and it was brightened up by a sanguine hope, which finds expression in his own glowing words. During his absence from court, the king and his courtiers, following Saul's example after Samuel's death, seek unto witches and wizards, eager now to discover that divine guidance they so much needed, but in the wrong quarter, seeing that by them the commissioned Voice of God had been silenced. It was a time of confusion and perplexity, a time of distress to king and people ; a time of weary looking for something better. But it ends as Hezekiah becomes king. Around this coming prince the prophet's hopes increasingly gathered ; and the more he knew of his private character, as it was daily unfolding itself before the prophet-teacher, the more distinct would his hope become. The

coming day of brightness is then foretold in language far grander than could ever find its realization under an earthly king,—in language, therefore, fitly descriptive of a Messianic period. The great king that is soon to reign has on his escutcheon four names, telling men of his perfection as Judah's ruler, for he is to be wonderful in counsel, mighty in power (a hero of God), abiding in protection, as the father of his people, and a guarantee of peace. Such language speaks of an ideal king, even a divine ruler, and only in a very poor degree found its fulfilment in Hezekiah or any Jewish king. But beyond a doubt, however far short the actual fact fell of the hope and the prophecy, great was the joy of the people, great was Isaiah's joy, when Hezekiah became king. His spirit rose high as the horizon became once again clear. The disappointments of a later day—the utter inability of any merely human king to secure perfect peace and righteousness, would convince the prophet that the vision he had had was of One yet to come. And in the light of the actual history of Him who has come, we now know of what time and of Whom the Spirit of God, that was in Isaiah, did testify. We now know what “the Zeal of the Lord” has performed.

PART VI.

(Pp. 35-39.)

MESSAGES TO THE KINGDOMS AFFECTED BY THE WAVE OF THE GREAT ASSYRIAN INVASION (722 B.C.).

The date of the death of Ahaz was, as we have seen, an important era for our prophet. He then came out of retirement to exercise for a time great influence in the councils of the young king. It is worthy of note that the death-year

o Uzziah and the death-year of Ahaz were each occasions of a special activity on the part of the prophet : and although it is not definitely stated, it is yet very probable that a series of prophecies should be assigned to the death-year of Hezekiah : but of this in its place. Here our concern is with a group of prophecies concerning the immediate neighbours of Jerusalem. The prophet is a watchman set upon his high tower, and has his answer to give not only concerning the issues of the great World-Empires, but also concerning the fate of those more petty states lying on the several sides of Judah, each of which had had in other days its own part to play in the affairs of Palestine.

On the south and west of Judah lay the towns of the Philistines. Concerning these the prophet speaks first. This whole territory lay right on the high road between Assyria and Egypt—along the coast : and of necessity the advancing hosts of these rival powers must pass along this way, carrying in their train all the consequences of the movements of large armies. The Philistines were hereditary enemies of Judah, being the descendants of those who were driven out of the central and northern portion of Canaan : and they were continually a thorn in the side of God's people. During the period of the Judges and of King Saul there was a chronic condition of war between Israel and the Philistines. They had been severely punished by David, but their power to inflict harm was never removed. Even during the last years of Ahaz, Isaiah had himself heard of their invading Judah. In these circumstances they would stand in awe only of the great empire with which Ahaz had formed an alliance : and about this time Philistia was rejoicing because the rod that smote her had been broken. This rod would be not so much either the power of Ahaz

or the power of Shalmaneser separately, but the joint co-operation of those two powers. The breaking up of this alliance would be the occasion of this boasting on the part of the Philistines. The death of Ahaz ended the alliance, for when Hezekiah came to the throne, there was a prince reigning over Judah to whom an alliance with Assyria was abhorrent. He listened to Isaiah, and would have nothing to do with such an alliance. It is worthy of notice that both Shalmaneser and Ahaz died within a short time of one another about 722 B.C.: so that when Hezekiah became king, a new sovereign, Sargon, was ruling in Nineveh. Now, although the boastful rejoicing of Philistia was vain enough, even in view of the fact that so powerful a prince as Sargon was reigning in Shalmaneser's room, the prophet is commissioned to declare that it has no ground whatsoever, in view of the further fact that in the person of Hezekiah there is a resuscitation of the power and glory of David's House. They are warned that a day of terrible disaster is in store for them. The serpent which they foolishly imagined dead, could never die: the divine vengeance against Philistia could never cease. Both from Jerusalem and from Nineveh, punishment will yet come against the Philistines. Under the protecting shield of a king divinely-favoured, the people of Jerusalem would dwell in safety: but that security would only mean the certain doom of Philistia, when the hosts of Nineveh with their rigorous military discipline, and the smoke of burning villages, marking their onward march, should come down upon the south. For Philistia there would be no refuge; for God's people that would be abundantly found in Jerusalem.

From the south and west the prophet now turns his eye to the east and speaks to Moab. His words tell of certain

destruction about to come upon this people within the brief period of three years : but as to the historical accomplishment of these words in this exact time, we have no account. Sargon in his extensive military invasions doubtless caused great suffering to the land of Moab, and Sennacherib secured Moab's submission some years later.

The burden against Moab has three parts or oracles. The first oracle, which is regarded as older than Isaiah's time, is a cry of lamentation over the suddenness of the ruin of Moab : and with singular power of detail, the prophet, fully familiar with the country, sees mourning passing from town to town, and from hill to hill. All is as if he saw the whole thing before his eyes. A very terrible humiliation had already been inflicted on Moab in the reign of Jehoram, king of Israel (2 Kings iii. 4, 25). During Ahab's reign, Moab had been compelled to pay a very heavy annual tribute, even an 100,000 lambs, and an 100,000 rams. Refusal to pay led to war from time to time, war resulting, however, invariably in the defeat of the Moabites. In such circumstances, the prophet urges upon Moab the wisdom of paying this tribute without trouble, or demur. When Hezekiah came to the throne, most favourable reports of his character spread : and immediately an embassy is sent from Moab, with complimentary messages to give honour to the new king. But the real purpose of this visit of the daughters of Moab across the boundary of the Arnon, was to secure more favourable terms from Hezekiah. The insinuation is made that Moab had been badly used in the past days by Israel, and Moab puts in a plea of self-extenuation. This the prophet repels, urging the rejection of all overtures from Moab, and the dismissal of the embassy. The pride and boasting of Moab were no new thing. "His boastings are nought." Destruction must

come, if there be not prompt and absolute submission. Even prayer to the gods will be futile. What a picture we have of vain prayer, as Moab is described as wearying himself in his sanctuary, at the altar of Chemosh, his god, and not prevailing! On the other hand, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Adjoining Moab on the south, and continually in close and friendly relationship therewith, was the country of Edom, or Idumea. Like Moab, Edom had once formed part of David's dominions, but in the days of disruption and weakness, both had rebelled. What about Edom now? When Moab was so soon to fall—when the Assyrian was spreading devastation all around—what was to be Edom's fate? The prophet hears the appeal addressed to him as God's watchman, and with anxious repetition. The words, "Watchman, what of the night?" How much of the night has passed? contain the cry of perplexity, and a demand for light and guidance. But the answer is an oracle of silence. Not yet is Edom to be told what is God's will concerning her future. She is assured that there will be alternations of light and darkness for her, as for all in the time of their probation. Meanwhile, patience is to have its perfect work; and after a little while she may inquire again. A later prophecy shows the work of divine judgment on this land.

And now come the messages to the Arabian tribes. Distant Kedar and the caravans of travelling Bedawin peoples come in for their warning. Stretching away to the south of Edom and Palestine lay Arabia with its nomadic races. These were the carriers of the world's commerce in the days before railways were introduced. When Joseph was sold into Egypt, he was taken thither by these Ishmaelite bands as they connected distant Meso-

potamia with Egypt, bringing the goods of the one to supply the wants of the other. It was so still. As country after country was feeling the consequences of the advance of Nineveh, these merchantmen would be the first to hear the news with alarm, and in many cases to give timely assistance. But these weakly-defended caravans would not stand long before the armies of Sargon. Only a brief space of one year is left to Kedar, and her mighty men. Against her the Lord of the whole earth had spoken. The day spoken of by Isaiah in his early prophecies had nearly come. The glory of His majesty was being made manifest as He was rising, and shaking terribly the earth.

And lastly, we think of Israel and Syria—the two powers which had between them controlled till now the territory from the northern boundary of Judah to the entering in of Hamath. It was a bitter day for the Twelve Tribes when Ephraim departed from Judah: it was likewise a disastrous day for Ephraim when she departed from Jehovah. To Judah there was this gain, that this new kingdom became interposed between her and Syria's idolatry, but this loss, that it was a distinct weakening of the force, divinely placed in the world for the preservation of pure religion. From the time of Ephraim's departure from God, the necessity of her continuance under divine safeguarding ceased: and when Hosea's last appeal was rejected, her doom was only a matter of days. Her alliance with Syria, the enemy of Assyria, brought this doom nearer, while her negotiation with Egypt brought it down at once upon her. Damascus was taken (732 B.C.), and soon after Samaria goes into captivity (722 B.C.). Right down from the North comes the irresistible wave of Assyrian invasion. The glory of Israel has gone: "it has been made thin." This furnishes the prophet with a fit occasion to address

a few faithful words to Jerusalem, urging what Hezekiah speedily brought about, a reform of an extensive character in the removal of altars, Asherim, and sun-images. For her idolatry Israel had just suffered a vengeance like unto that which the whole of Israel had inflicted upon the Hivites, Perizzites, and other heathen inhabitants of the land, and for a similar reason—a God-denying idolatry. The Ten Tribes had now been carried away, even as the Canaanites had been driven away from before God's people on their glorious entry into the land of promise. Judah is, therefore, earnestly warned against following in the idolatrous ways of Israel: and she is assured that if she forgets the God of her salvation, the labour of her hands shall all be vain. There will be for her, too, as there has been for Ephraim, a day of grief and desperate sorrow, where there would be no harvest. Alas, that this warning was not fully taken! "Yet Judah turned not unto God with her whole heart, but feignedly: so that backsliding Israel," having had less opportunity of repentance than Judah, "proved herself more just than her treacherous sister." This is the prophet Jeremiah's comment on the state of things in 620 B.C.—one century later. (Jer. iii. 6-11.)

Thus, in his outlook over the peoples, the prophet delivers five important messages to what are the smaller kingdoms. While the greater issues were being involved and worked out in the struggle for supremacy between Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon, Isaiah clearly saw that the smaller peoples too were under the control of God. To the prophet, Jehovah is no tribal God, but the God of the whole world. To this God all destinies, great or small, are open and naked. In His Hand are all our times. To all He speaks a warning word. He who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

PART VII.

(Pp. 40-54.)

THE REIGN OF KING HEZEKIAH, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF HIS
RELIGIOUS REFORMS, HIS SICKNESS, AND RECOVERY :
AND THE TWO ASSYRIAN INVASIONS (722-693 B.C.).

In English history there is a striking parallel to the events of this period in Jewish history. Edward VI., under the guardianship of Cranmer, had established a pure form of religious worship in England. On his death, Queen Mary upset everything, and for their allegiance to the Protestant Faith, drove into retirement those who had escaped the fires of Smithfield. With Elizabeth a new era dawned, and the religious life of the country displayed itself in great enthusiasm, resulting in the overthrow of the Armada. The reign of Ahaz was like unto that of Mary : with the accession of Hezekiah begins a reign like unto that of Elizabeth, having in its course the magnificent defeat of Sennacherib's hosts by the Arm of the Lord. God's banished people took new heart of courage, and the hidden prophet once more appears as the guiding spirit of a new era.

A great reform characterised the early days of the new reign. A complete iconoclasm or idol-breaking is carried through. The brazen serpent made by Moses, and associated with a great scene of healing, had been raised to an undue place of reverence. This is declared to be Nehushtan, or a mere piece of brass. Then the temple, in which the heathenish altar of Ahaz had been erected, was thoroughly purified and repaired. The usual services of Jehovah, which had suffered neglect, were renewed : the feasts were restored, and the sacrifices duly offered. The honour and

glory of God were called to remembrance. Isaiah and Hezekiah worked hand to hand, as at a later time in a similar, though much more radical reform, Jeremiah and Josiah did. This happened in the first year of King Hezekiah. The purification of the temple, and the consecration of the priests were immediately followed by the celebration of the Passover in such a manner as to fill Jerusalem with joy, and to remind all of the glorious days at the beginning of Solomon's reign—the best days of David's House.

It is interesting to note here that many belonging to the Ten Tribes joined in these Passover celebrations—an approach being thereby made to those days foretold by the prophet Amos (ix. 11) when God would raise “up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, and raise up his ruins, and build it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which had been called by His Name.” The separation of the Tribes had been occasioned by idolatrous conduct on Solomon's part during his last years; their reunion, a result greatly to be desired in the interests of pure religion, could only be brought about by a strenuous endeavour to obey the law of Jehovah. To this work Hezekiah devotes his best energy, and with singular success.

The reform of Josiah has been spoken of as more radical than that of Hezekiah, and for this reason. In Hezekiah's reign the altars on the High places were removed, but in the latter reign these High places themselves were completely desecrated. “The High places that were before Jerusalem did king Josiah defile” (2 Kings xxiii. 13).

The chronology of this period is difficult to determine. It is manifest that the captivity of the Ten Tribes took place after the accession of Hezekiah, and the date of this im-

portant event is fixed beyond question as 722 B.C. Probably, therefore, Hezekiah saw this event accomplished in the very beginning of his reign: and was thereby all the more stimulated in his endeavours to put his house in order. If this is so, the dates given in the historical passages are perplexing: and if fuller authorities were forthcoming, might be emended. These facts are clearly corroborated—that the siege of Samaria, begun by Shalmaneser in 725 B.C., lasted for three years (as both sacred and profane history assure us), and that the reign of Hezekiah had begun before Samaria ceased to be a kingdom.

The next important episode in the life of Hezekiah, is the time of his sickness. This date is determined by the information we have of the embassy sent by Merodach, king of Babylon, to congratulate the king on his recovery—an embassy concerning which much interest was excited in two quarters. It raised the ire of Sargon, king of Nineveh, for the object of the Babylonian embassy could not but be known to this fully-informed ruler: and, as we shall see later, it caused deep grief to the prophet, for it revealed the fact that the lately healed king was only too willing to negotiate an alliance with Babylon against Assyria—a policy as much to be condemned, when favoured by a reforming king, as that of an alliance with Assyria was condemned, when adopted by an idolatrous king. With God there is no respect of persons: evil is always evil in His sight. The first great invasion of Judah by Sargon, which was only prevented from reaching to the citadel of Jerusalem, by a humiliating peace—an invasion so graphically portrayed by the prophet in chap. x. ver. 28, is dated in the year 710 B.C., or some twelve years after Hezekiah became king. This is spoken of with approximate accuracy as the fourteenth

year of his reign: but by an error, probably of a copyist, the name Shalmaneser is written, instead of that of Sargon, It may be surmised that the original text simply read thus, "About the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, the king of Assyria came up," etc.: a scribe noting by way of interrogation the king's name on the margin. As often happened in similar cases, this note found its way in course of transcription into the text itself.*

We thus obtain this result, that Hezekiah's severe illness and recovery occurred in 710 B.C.: and as his life was prolonged for fifteen years, his death-year would be about 693 B.C. The duration of his reign would thus be probably nearly twenty-nine years. The sickness of Hezekiah was at one time a serious matter, and seemed to betoken the termination of his reign. But the divine warning was regarded, at least to some extent: and the king got better. As a memorial of this recovery, there is preserved a beautiful psalm composed by the royal patient himself. The goodness of the Lord, and the divine forgiveness are now thought of, and among the living, who have been brought back from the very gates of death, the king praises God, reminding us of another restored one in Ps. cxvi.

No sooner, however, is this sickness gone, than a great temptation comes upon the king, leading to a great sin. There was at this time a powerful king ruling in Babylon, and indications of a great future for this ruler, though at present a tributary of Assyria, were being given. Sargon was manifestly jealous. Hence the wiser course for Hezekiah to have followed would have been to avoid giving

* The lovers of the Bible need in no way be concerned by such difficulties as to names and dates, which a complete knowledge would clear up: but such difficulties are very real things, and have to be acknowledged as occurring in the best copies of the record of Revelation.

offence to Assyria. The temptation, however, was great, to lean upon the arm of flesh, and to rejoice in any power that seemed capable of restraining the power of Sargon. Under this temptation Hezekiah fell. And immediately the Assyrian armies invaded Judah—an invasion which Isaiah must have seen, for he describes its sad progress. So near did Sargon's hosts come, even to Nob, that he is said to have shaken his hand contemptuously at the daughter of Zion. Hezekiah postponed the crisis by sending an embassy to the Assyrian king, and acknowledging his offence in the matter of the reception of the Babylonian embassy. A heavy penalty had to be paid, however, before peace could be secured—so heavy, that to raise it the king had to despoil the Temple doors, and empty the Temple exchequer. This most humiliating transaction was a severe punishment indeed. But as we shall find Isaiah complaining in his burden of the valley of vision, the divine purpose was not served: for while God called the people to mourn over their sins, they had taken to rejoicing at the departure of their terrible enemy.

This departure of Sargon was simply a temporary thing. There could be no permanent halt in the onward movement southwards towards the great crisis of Assyria's fate. About five years after this Sargon died, and Sennacherib ascended the throne of Nineveh. Babylon was again tributary, but Egypt was unsubdued. Hence, in 701 B.C., Sennacherib advances to the conquest of the land of the Pharaohs. Now, most unfortunately for Jerusalem, the Egyptian party in the councils of Hezekiah, led by Shebna, had gained too much influence: and Judah incurred Sennacherib's anger by reason of negotiating so largely with Egypt. The Assyrian army was divided into two great parts

—one portion being detailed for the siege of Jerusalem, and the other for the invasion of Egypt. We follow the fortune of each army in turn, as it is sent to carry out the boastful plans of Sennacherib.

Jerusalem prepares herself for a regular siege. The Rabshakeh, or second in command—a staff officer, perhaps commander of a division of the Assyrian forces—is sent to demand instant capitulation : it was thought by Sennacherib sheer presumption for Hezekiah to think of resistance, and he imagined that he had simply to put in his demand. But the boastful king was ignoring God, and entirely misunderstanding and misinterpreting the religious reforms of Hezekiah. He knew not the assurances that Isaiah was continually giving to Hezekiah, that Jehovah was using Assyria as an instrument only, to which He could put bounds at His pleasure. Never before in his experience had Sennacherib heard of a God, who could resist his progress : he believed in the almighty power of Asshur. Isaiah, however, knew that Jehovah was the Supreme : and the protection of this only true and living God was now assured to Hezekiah. A bound was, therefore, put to the progress of Assyria—a bound which was an anticipation of the day of Assyria's fall. In a way most mysterious to man, not fully explained by the Egyptian traditions, but revealing the direct interposition of Jehovah, the army that lay before Jerusalem was decimated. At eventide there was terror in the ranks, and before the morning they ceased to be. “This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.” The tents were struck, and Jerusalem was delivered. So much for the fate of one division of the army.

The other portion had meanwhile marched onwards to the border of Egypt, and on the field of El-Tekeh had been

successful in a pitched fight with Tirhakah, the king of the land, who had come thus far to meet him. Had Jerusalem only fallen, the other division of the army might now have come up, and made the conquest of Egypt complete. This part of the programme, however, had miscarried : and Sennacherib was unable to pursue his advantage. The escutcheon of Assyria had received a stain : Asshur's proud progress, its first great check. From this campaign Sennacherib returned in dejection : and during the remainder of his reign had not much success in any other great undertaking. He held his own, doubtless : but this was not enough for the pride of Asshur. Here, only success could pay : there was not for him the tenure and joy, which righteousness always secures. His last days were unhappy, and in the very temple of his gods he ended his life, killed by his own children. The sacred history would seem to imply that this disastrous end came at once : but here twenty years of Assyrian rule count for nothing. "The mills of God grind slowly : but they grind to powder." Sennacherib died in 681 B.C., some twelve years after Hezekiah.

The death of this great king of Judah occurred a few years after the great deliverance : and his closing years must have been filled with grateful remembrances of what Jehovah his Salvation had done for him. In this day Jehovah alone was exalted, and all the idols were utterly abolished. Hezekiah shared in this glory, and happy must have been the evening of his days. The prophet—how he, too, must have rejoiced in the happy turn events had taken. For God had fulfilled the word which he had been commissioned to declare. "For His own sake, and for His servant David's sake," He had defended this city.

PART VIII.

(Pp. 54-59.)

A SERIES OF PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE CERTAIN
DOOM OF ASSYRIA, DELIVERED IN THE REIGN OF
HEZEKIAH (722-705 B.C.).

During the reign of Ahaz, Isaiah had condemned the alliance with Assyria. The main reason was this. Such an alliance with a heathen power was a distinct departure from trust in Jehovah, as Judah's God and Protector. But another reason now clearly appears in the prophecies of Hezekiah's reign—viz., that while Jehovah was going to effect a signal deliverance for His people, He was going to inflict an equally signal mark of His wrath upon Assyria. This part of the divine purpose the prophet now declares to ears willing to hear him.

Very special instruction is here given as to the way, in which the believing heart should view human history, and think of the great World-Powers engaged in its tragedy. These World-Powers embody and represent some foundation principle—each its own varying form. But though different, these principles are all expressions of Self as opposed to God. At that time Assyria asserted herself as an independent Force in human history. Self-aggrandisement was the one aim and purpose. To spread the glory of Asshur, this was why great armies were moved. To make his nominees princes and kings, even as in modern days Napoleon did, this was the goal of all effort of each Assyrian king. There was no thought of advancing civilisation, or of spreading truth, purity, and righteousness. Every nation that resisted was depopulated and carried into captivity:

and thus most effectually was Asshur's power spread by the importation of a new population, that owed everything to the conqueror's favour. This fact explains the carrying away into captivity of the Ten Tribes, and then of Judah: it was the method of conquest at that time in vogue. Kingdom after kingdom had fallen before Assyria; what could prevent Jerusalem from falling likewise? To Nineveh's self-confidence there seemed no limit.

But the divinely-taught prophet saw things differently. The power of Assyria was only a rod in Jehovah's hand; a rod that could not move itself, and that must cease moving, when God so decreed. The prophet, therefore, exclaims, "O Assyrian! thou art only the rod of the divine anger: thou art sent by God only to fulfil a divine charge. If Jerusalem does suffer, it will only be by way of needful chastisement: the glory will all belong to God; and when the work has been accomplished, punishment will fall on the pride of Nineveh." Judah, God's chosen people, against which Assyria now boasts so loudly, and which, in a season of infatuation, had leant on Assyria—Judah will yet by God's decree inflict a deadly wound on that boastful power,—such a wound as had been inflicted on Egypt in the day of the Exodus, or in the day of Oreb on Midian. With this supreme confidence in Jehovah, and with this way of construing history, Isaiah could boldly come into the royal presence, and say: "O my people, be not afraid of the Assyrian!" With true prophetic insight Isaiah was endowed with power and courage: and could view even the greatest kings of the earth, and their movements and combinations, as things to be laughed at, and held in derision (Psalm ii.). Only for a little while shall the wicked vaunt himself against the righteous. These "little whiles" are

seasons of testing to faith in every age. The "little while" of Assyria's boastful, and apparently unchecked, progress, was such a time to Jerusalem. The news of her conquest of Babylon caused alarm to Hezekiah and his people. Isaiah himself, apparently with regret, but under a deep sense of duty, feels himself bound to tell out all the truth about the success of Sargon in his siege of Babylon (p. 79-80)—a siege that lasted twelve years (722-710 B.C.). So long as the hands of Sargon were thus tied up by his refractory vassal, Jerusalem was safe enough: but the moment the siege ended, Hezekiah felt the weight of Sargon's wrath for his sympathetic treatment of the envoys of Babylon. Judah is invaded. And this angry invasion of Judah is fully described by Isaiah. If we are allowed to adopt a suggested emendation in verse 27 here, we shall then have, in place of a very difficult, an almost unintelligible, passage, a clear heading for the account of the invasion of Sargon. Behold! the prophet seems to cry out, the great destroyer is on his march from the North! See his progress from town to town—Aiath to Migron, Michmash to Geba, Gallim to Anathoth, Madmenah to Nod—there's consternation on every hand, and Jerusalem herself is terribly alarmed. But just at this stage a peace is made: and the army of Sargon is retired.

Reference is most probably made to this peace in the burden of the valley of vision. This expression—valley of vision—is applied to Jerusalem, where Jehovah was pleased to give visions concerning His will to His servants. The prophet sees the whole city turned out in festive array for a time of rejoicing: and he expresses his disappointment, a thing he would not have done in connection with the great rejoicings so appropriate on the occasion of the deliverance

from Sennacherib. On this occasion there was no reason for congratulation : it was a day of disgrace, discomfiture, and despair. Judah did not call upon Jehovah as she should have done. When there was a distinct call to national repentance, the prophet found, on the contrary, only joy and gladness because of the departure of Sargon. The indifference to the real state of the case is very serious in the eyes of the prophet : it is an unpardonable sin. How often have God's servants to deplore the foolish rejoicing of men over disgraceful compromises.

Hence he rebukes the almost universal panic among the nations : he condemns Judah's unworthy fear. In glowing words, only too brief, he foretells the complete and sudden overthrow of the hosts of Assyria. What is to happen ten years after, the prophet sees as an already accomplished fact. For the prophetic confidence in a divine must-be, leads to the description of it as an actuality. Faith sees not the difficulties that reason emphasises : but laughs at impossibilities, saying : "It shall be done." In this spirit Isaiah delivers his message to Hezekiah : in this spirit he seeks again, and yet again to allay fear, and to bring his royal master, and loved people, into a worthy attitude towards the rapidly ripening purpose of God.

Isaiah has no doubt whatever as to the manner in which Judah should meet Assyria. He would have her thoroughly purge herself from all false confidences, from all sin, and completely rely upon the almighty power of Jehovah. He is assured that the Assyrian shall be entirely broken, even in the land of Judah, as afterwards it came to pass : and the joy over a temporary and very partial deliverance he cannot understand. The prophet sees the divine purpose against Assyria : he sees it in its glorious fulness : he is persuaded

that Jehovah's hand is stretched out against Nineveh, and nothing on earth can turn it back.

About this time Egypt had sent ambassadors to Hezekiah seeking his assistance against Assyria. Egypt was alarmed, as was Judah, at the report of Sennacherib's victories, and urges a strong alliance. Hence Isaiah speaks not only to Hezekiah, but also to the messengers who had come from Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia and Egypt. They are bidden to return homewards with a message of calm confidence, and an assurance for their master that Assyria will not be able to hurt him just yet. The prophet speaks in complimentary terms of the Egyptian forces, as he recalls their former pre-eminence in war and civilisation. But he thinks not of any human powers: his thoughts occupy themselves with the government of the universe by Jehovah alone. In contrast to the perplexity and restless movement of men, he pictures the calm certainty and restful waiting of Jehovah. There is no haste in the divine purpose: it shall yet be opportunely accomplished. Egypt shall soon recognise this divine supremacy, and in the moment of glad deliverance shall send gifts to the Lord of Hosts, who dwelleth in Mount Zion. And as we have seen, thus it fell out. When suddenly the Assyrian army was paralysed at the gates of Jerusalem, the conquering hosts at El-Tekeh were withdrawn—Egypt breathed freely. Among the many who brought gifts to Hezekiah, not the least grateful would be Egypt's king, and not the least in value would be the gift brought by his people.*

* The opening verses of ch. xi. (see page 91) may very well embody the words addressed to Hezekiah at this time. Isaiah's ideal of a true king is there described.

PART IX.

(Pp. 60-68.)

THE PROPHETIC CONDEMNATION OF AN ALLIANCE WITH EGYPT.

In the councils of Hezekiah there was a strong party favourable to an alliance between Judah and Egypt. At the head of the party stood Shebna. He occupied a post corresponding to that of our prime minister, and was Treasurer, or chief adviser of the king. His tenure of office bode no good to Jerusalem: his pro-Egyptian policy, like the pro-Assyrian policy of Ahaz, was utterly displeasing to Jehovah, and alien to the best traditions of David's House. Against this policy Isaiah is specially commissioned to raise his voice. In the discharge of this mission he singles out Shebna, a stranger apparently, as his Syrian name shows, who had by ambition raised himself to high office, and was devoid of religious principle. He had been securing honour for himself, establishing his family in the land, as he thought, and as the custom was, hewing out for himself a sepulchre. But from that high office he would soon be disgracefully ousted, when king and people would alike come to see the unworthy character of an Egyptian alliance. And it is worthy of remark that this prophecy was speedily fulfilled. For when the Rabshakeh is met by Hezekiah's messengers, Shebna does not occupy the first place. Not only, however, does the prophet foretell the deposition of Shebna, he designates his successor. This new premier was to be Eliakim: and his administration was to receive the blessing of Jehovah. Great hopes gathered round him: he was to be the people's protector, and a glory to his father's house.

But of him, alas ! as of every human leader, however great, these hopes could not be fully realised : and the word goes forth that even this nail that was once fastened in a sure place shall give way. Thus the language here used about Eliakim finds its perfect fulfilment only in Him, whose supreme prerogative it is so to open that no man can shut, even Jesus Christ.

Isaiah showed his firm conviction of the truth of his prophecies concerning the nations in a very striking manner. We have seen how he embodied in the names of his children the message he had received of the Lord concerning Syria and Damascus. Now we see him for the space of three years walking up and down among his people without his prophetic mantle—so to teach them, in symbolic manner, that soon Assyria would deprive Egypt of all her glory. During these years Isaiah would very powerfully help in changing public opinion, and by this method convince men of the folly of trusting in Egypt. The occasion of this singular and impressive procedure on the part of the prophet was the siege of Ashdod, a strong Philistine town, by the forces of Assyria under the Tartan, another term indicative of high military office, and not of a name. This was just prior to the invasion of Judah in 710 B.C. by Sargon himself : so that the three years of Isaiah's public demonstration of his disapproval of the Egyptian alliance would be from 714 to 711 B.C. The great success of the Assyrian forces against Ashdod, which put an end to the temporary boasting of Philistia, gave Isaiah clearest confirmation of his prophetic hope that very speedily Egypt would fall under the rule of Nineveh. And had Isaiah's advice been taken, Judah might have escaped intact. Her great folly, therefore, was an alliance with a power already doomed, and

the punishment of which was only postponed by the Judæan alliance, which caused the suffering originally purposed against Egypt to be inflicted on Jerusalem.

In Isaiah's time Ethiopia and Egypt had been united under a powerful sovereign, as the Inscriptions tell us : but there had been a number of kingdoms whereby the power of the country had been weakened. So that while Assyria had been steadily increasing, Egypt had been going back. About the time of Ahaz the tide turned, and Egypt speedily gathered up her strength to face her northern rival. In 720 B.C., at Raphia, Shabaka was defeated by an Assyrian force, and thus checked. But under Tirhakah her fortune again recovered, and this king sought the co-operation of Hezekiah.

It was a singular and almost unaccountable infatuation, in the eyes of Isaiah, that led Jerusalem into negotiations with Egypt. It was rebellion against Jehovah : nay, it was folly : soon it was going to be their shame and reproach. At this very time the ambassadors of Tirhakah, the Pharaoh of the land, were on their way : already Hezekiah was returning the compliment, and sending presents to this king. The prophet sees the caravans carrying gifts to the south : and he denounces the whole transaction. For the help of Egypt shall be in vain. Rahab may boast of what she will do : but the prophet assures Hezekiah that in the time of need she will not fulfil her promises, and will only sit still. Such words were met by unbelief, and positive refusal : hence the prophet does now what he did in similar circumstances, in the reign of Ahaz : he goes and writes his message down, that it may be on record for ever. In this procedure we learn something about the meaning of the written prophecies. Above all things the prophets would

desire that their declarations of the will of God should be written on the fleshly tablets of the heart, and thus embodied in living epistles; but when unbelief refused these messages, they would be compelled to write them down.

A vision of the future prosperity of Zion follows—one very much of an apocalyptic kind, and in line with those of Joel and other prophets. But all the bright hopes of Isaiah are conditional on the coming destruction of the Assyrian empire by the utterance of God's mighty voice. The annihilation of the Assyrian power is graphically set forth as one great funeral obsequy, such as were well known among Eastern nations. The divine command prepares the Tophet or pyre: and in its flames all the glory of Assyria shall consume away. What had been prepared by human wisdom for the idolatrous worship of Moloch, shall now by divine decree be used for Assyria's destruction: her king shall be the great victim.

The folly, nay wickedness, of an alliance with Egypt is emphasised from the point of view of refusing the divine protection. Wisdom and strength are not alone to be found in Egypt: they are only truly to be found in Jehovah, who *also is wise*. The failure to bear in mind the transient character of all human aid is a continual temptation. Beautiful illustrations are now given to show forth the divine protection. The vanity of trust in human shepherds, which is a distinct forgetting that the mighty lion-like power of God is holding Jerusalem in safety, is forcibly, even strangely, shown. God will not move from His purpose and His covenant by reason of any of the temporary expedients of men. Jerusalem would rest securely in His firm hold. And then the divine love is shadowed forth by the love of parent birds as they fly around the tree in which are the

nests of their little helpless ones. In God the prophet sees not only the mighty power for protection possessed by a lion, but also the loving and watchful solicitude of a parent—the tenderness of a mother. What a revelation of the divine character does this prophecy give! No wonder that the prophet bursts out into an earnest invitation to Judah to come back to her allegiance to such a God: an allegiance that would secure not only one great defeat of Assyria such as Hezekiah saw, but a complete and perpetual overthrow of that mighty Empire. This event did ultimately come about: but not as soon as it might have been accomplished, had Jerusalem fully trusted in Jehovah, and turned away from all her false confidences.

We have a very sublime prophetic description here of the judgment coming upon Egypt—Isaiah's last words to that country. The prophet, unmoved by negotiations between Egypt and Judah, holds to his distinct announcement of the overthrow of Egypt. This event was postponed, indeed, by the miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem, and its consequences for the army of Sennacherib: but only for the time. The successor of this king—viz., Esar-Haddon, secured tribute from Manasseh, Hezekiah's unworthy son, and conquered Egypt in 672 B.C. Yet another campaign had to be fought before Assyria should secure the complete submission of the land of the Pharaohs. This was conducted by Asur-Bani-Pal, who finally crushed Tirhakah, and destroyed Thebes, the No of Nahum in 662 B.C. This was Assyria's last exploit: her power had reached its climax, and her fall was near. In these events, however, Isaiah's prophecy found its fulfilment. For after this, Egypt, in a new capital, that of Sais, began to be independent once more under Psammetichus, who perhaps is the cruel lord here referred

to. It may, however, be thought that this cruel lord was the king of Assyria, under whom Egypt suffered so much.

Most graphically does the prophet tell us all about the perplexity and confusion of Egypt—a condition of things that prevailed during the closing years of 'Tirhakah's reign. The source of the country's greatness was the river Nile, but upon this river and all its canals God's judgment was to come. In this way the cessation of Egyptian prosperity is shown. History has much to tell about the way in which the comparative drying up of the Nile has been caused, whereby her tides have been decreased at the expense of the fertility of the land. Sacred history foretells this as part of a divine purpose.

But, amid the darkness that is to enshroud the future of this country, the prophet has a vision of light. He is convinced, that even in that land there could be some public recognition of Jehovah, the God of the whole earth. He sees a method of dealing with the question, that divides the world among the rival powers. Why could the three great powers not agree to a threefold division of the countries between them? Ah, why not? Human ambition answers. Men will not acknowledge Jehovah: and in a reign of peace put an end to their own personal or national aggrandisement. And thus the prophetic hope of Egypt's conversion was never realised.

PART X.

(Pp. 68-77.)

THE PROPHET'S COMPLAINT CONCERNING JERUSALEM, AND SOLEMN INDICTMENT OF THE NATION.

The state of Jerusalem at this time led the prophet to denounce the outstanding sins of the people in strong

language. The divine vengeance had already fallen upon the crown of pride of Ephraim, and the drunken infatuation of the Ten Tribes had led to their captivity. Surely Judah might have learnt wisdom from this warning ! They who were the residue or remnant of the chosen people, might surely have displayed their supreme confidence in God ! But no ! The prophet beholds the prevalence of these same sins in Jerusalem, which had brought ruin on Ephraim. He finds his warning words despised. He is mocked at as one who is simply repeating the old commonplaces, precept upon precept, line upon line. Hence, while deeply moved with grief at all he sees around him, and at the reception he receives from his own people, he is under obligation to declare the divine wrath against them. He speaks first to those who were scorning his message, and treating himself so contumeliously : this he does in a most eloquent passage, in words that display the great power of Isaiah as a prophet. In burning words he shows how the Word of God will stand, while all the covenants of a false expediency and a time-serving generation will utterly perish. The true prophetic standpoint is seen in such words as these, which declare that judgment will be the line, and righteousness the plummet, in the divine building up of things : while everything that is unjust and unrighteous will be swept away. The divine purpose is compared to a well-laid foundation-stone—a stone upon which a divine and beautiful superstructure will be raised, even though the would-be builders of this, or any successive generation, refuse to build thereon. Those truly subservient to the divine purpose can wait God's time : for those who rest in Him shall not be restless. The rejection of the divine message in human ignorance, is, after all, a ripple on the surface of

the ocean : that message is ever finding its own fulfilment. "Rest" then "in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him."

This lesson of calm waiting on God is beautifully enforced by a parable drawn from agricultural experience. The prophet calls the attention of impatient men to the method God follows every year in the course of Nature. A time of preparation of the soil precedes the sowing : and a time of waiting always precedes the harvest. While again, when the harvest is ingathered, different methods are adopted by the farmer for his different crops. Shall not He who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in wisdom, who thus instructs the farmer in his various methods, and calm waiting, instruct also us men in the wider concerns of the world's spiritual history? Shall there not be a spiritual preparation, and an infinite variety of methods and instruments used by God, before He shall be divinely satisfied?

The prophet weeps over Jerusalem. And even as Christ wept on the Mount of Olives, and foretold a day of siege, so now does Isaiah. History repeats itself. He weeps over the sins that render such a divine visitation necessary : but his faith in a covenant-God enables him to foresee, and to declare the discomfiture of all her foes. Once before, as Jebus, she had been besieged and captured, when she became Ariel, a city or hearth of God. Once again shall she be in terrible straits : but this time God will remember His own city, and for His servant David's sake, He will defend her. In a moment, and in some most surprising manner, the foes of Jerusalem shall be utterly destroyed. Thus it happened to Assyria ; for surely Sennacherib would hardly believe the news that came : he would be as one dreaming. So great had been his confidence that Jerusalem would easily fall into his hands !

He had failed to remember that God was still on the side of His people, and this did make all the difference. God is not always "on the side of the big battalions."

In Jerusalem there was a professed service of Jehovah. They had the Temple, with its rites : the law of Moses, with its teachers. And yet there was very much formality ; much false service ; much drawing near to God without the heart ; much making void of the divine law by human traditions. The prophet has solemnly to arraign his nation, and to declare that God is not mocked—that the divine Eye is always open, and the divine Ear never deaf. The interests of right and purity, both in moral and religious life, may for a time appear to suffer at the hands of men, but being dear to God, they shall receive a glorious vindication. They that err in spirit shall yet come to a true understanding of the divine method ; while they that murmur against the divine judgment shall yet learn the secret of the Lord, that which He teaches those who fear Him.

And in connection with the prophet's charge against Jerusalem, and his disappointment at her unwillingness to repent, we take in the great indictment of the Jewish nation—that brilliant prophecy that now stands in our Authorised Version as a most fit and appropriate introduction to the whole collection of the prophecies of Isaiah. It bears, however, internal evidence of having been written at a time when traces of desolation, resulting from invasion, were to be seen on every side ; when indeed the terrible foe had not as yet approached the citadel, but had given warning of what he might do. The country had been ravaged, but Zion was still secure. It is also manifest that the prophet's tone is now one of disappointed hope. The process of hardening is now far advanced, and the prophet speaks to many unwilling

ears. His earlier prophecies are more hopeful ; he was then more sanguine about the success of his work. But here there is an outburst of indignation at the ingratitude and rebellion of Jerusalem. In the indictment three grave charges are pressed home—even filial ingratitude, the neglect of the discipline of divine providence, and formality with insincerity in religious worship. And truly, on Jerusalem's part, the city of privilege, such sins were scarlet, and red like crimson. Naturally enough the prophet laments over such a state of things : but he has an offer of forgiveness for a repentant people. Still he has the vision of a purified city ; and in such a city, once again to be named the City of Righteousness, he looks forward to seeing God's law honoured.

PART XI.

(Pp. 77-79.)

THE PROPHET'S MESSAGE TO TYRE, THE METROPOLIS OF THE WORLD'S COMMERCE (709 B.C.).

It is not possible to date with any accuracy this prophecy. All that can be said about the matter is that it must have been delivered subsequent to the fall of Babylon in 710 B.C. for it is clearly to this event that reference is made by these words in the section. "This people is no more : the Assyrian hath appointed it for the beasts of the wilderness." And it must have been uttered before the fall of Sennacherib's hosts at the gates of Jerusalem.

A special importance attaches to this prophecy, as showing Isaiah's universality of teaching, and his intensely human interest in all the movements of men. Not alone does he speak to the great kingdoms based on military prowess, but

also to this great Phœnician Empire, founded on commercial supremacy. Very gradually, but steadily, had Tyre and Sidon built up a most extensive trade, especially in the precious metals: they tapped all the known mines of the world along the Mediterranean Sea, and became the great emporium or place of exchange for the merchandise of the African and the Asiatic empires. What Alexandria was in the first century of Christianity, and Great Britain is now, Tyre was then. Her situation on the sea—almost on an island, with her barrier of mountains behind, marked out her destiny as a sea-faring people. However strange a contrast she may have presented to the agricultural people to which he belonged, the prophet felt himself specially entrusted with a divine message to such a nation: and thus manifested his calling as the messenger of Jehovah, the God of the whole earth.

But his message is one of approaching doom,—a doom largely brought upon Tyre by the consequences of an all-absorbing commerce. Here trade had become the one goal: money the measure of all things. To this all the higher and spiritual energies of the people had been prostituted. Hence in most striking language, but language common enough in Scripture, the prophet compares Tyre to a harlot, and her industry to whoredom. The prophetic ideal involves a living relationship between man and God, symbolised in human measure by marriage: hence any departure from Jehovah, any deviation from supreme devotion to Him, is the infidelity of adultery. Judah and Jerusalem were guilty of this in their alliances with heathen powers, and in the idolatries that flowed therefrom. To Isaiah's pure eye Tyre is guilty of this same sin, inasmuch as she has forsaken God, and made commercial success her god. Hence

a woe is pronounced on all her merchantmen, or ships of Tarshish as they are graphically called, from specially trading thither. But great indeed is the surprise and consternation such an event as the overthrow of Tyre and Sidon will produce, not only in these places, but wherever the report of their fall shall come. The extent of Tyre's relations was very great. The prophet Ezekiel (ch. xxvii.) gives a very full description of the greatness of her glory. Her king and people were guilty of an overweening confidence in their own defence: and hence the exclamation, "Who hath purposed this against Tyre, the city that confers crowns, and whose merchants are princes, and whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth?"

Strange indeed must the word of Isaiah have sounded—as with calm confidence in Jehovah he foretold the destruction of Assyria's brute force, Egypt's diplomacy, and now Tyre's commercial supremacy. But all this strangeness disappears when Isaiah's standpoint is understood, and his unwavering belief in the ultimate success of righteousness is perceived. To him spiritual power, even that of God, was, after all, the paramount power.

In this message there is also a revelation of the divine method in dealing with men and nations. For here the divine purpose is to show how stained is all human pride, and how contemptible are those whose honour comes from men only. What God brings about is a gradual uncovering of things, a discovering of their true character, and therefore the manifestation of the utter unsoundness and instability of anything not based on the divine will. The insecurity of all false confidences will be revealed as prop after prop is removed. The sea was to be no sure girdle or means of protection to Tyre. Tyre cannot understand this. But

the prophet meets the unbelieving surprise of the city by pointing to the victories already accomplished by the Assyrian power : and he finds corroboration for the accomplishment of his message of woe against the ships of Tarshish in the destruction of the hosts of Babylon. For the third time then, even with increase of earnestness, the prophet cries out, "Howl, ye ships of Tarshish!"

The large place occupied by Tyre in the world's map is soon to be empty. A period of forgetting is mentioned, even the threescore and ten years of a human life : but in this we are not to look for any exact historical reckoning. It was not Isaiah's wont to narrow down his great spiritual messages to the standards of a human calculation. It is revealed to him that Tyre shall be forgotten for a long time ; and so it fell out in the drama of history. Nebuchadnezzar (in 585-572 B.C.), after a long and exhaustive siege of thirteen years, obtained the capitulation of the city : while, after a brief season of renewed activity, she again fell, and this time to rise no more, under the attack of Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. Something like these alternations the prophet sees. The time of forgetting is to be succeeded by a time of revived industry, when once again, but not with all her old charms, Tyre entered into the commerce of the nations. This renewal of success is regarded as of grace—a divine visitation. And surely rightly. But the message closes with a vision of what ought to be in such a time of gracious renewal. In former days the wealth of Tyre had been all set apart to the service of Melkarth, the goddess of the city—to her it had been holiness. But why might not Tyre acknowledge Jehovah, and consecrate to His service her wealth ? The prophet sees that this ought to be : and in the form of a prophecy he inculcates his great hope. That this, however,

was never realised, is clear. But we are here taught, that it is perfectly possible to engage in commerce in harmony with our service of God, provided only we consecrate our possessions to Him, and remember His claims to the first-fruits of our substance, Who has given us all. All the labours of our hand, all the energies of our mind, all the material success of our lives, may be laid on God's altar, a consecrated offering.

PART XII.

(Pp. 79-86.)

A SERIES OF PROPHECIES CONCERNING BABYLON.

Under the title, 'wilderness of the sea,' Babylon is described. The language points to a most extensive tract of country watered by a mighty river, the river Euphrates. Mesopotamia, which literally means the country in the midst of seas, is the name of the great district watered by the famous rivers Tigris and Euphrates. Standing on the Euphrates, Babylon had a long and chequered history. Even before Nineveh had made her influence felt in the world's affairs, Babylon had been a flourishing city. About the year 880 B.C. Nineveh's power begins to be felt, and in 821 B.C., when Uzziah had not yet ascended the throne, Babylon became a vassal of Nineveh; and remained in the state of vassalage, during the reigns of several weak kings, for about one century. With the accession of Merodach-Baladan in 726 B.C., things begin to change, and Babylon manifests a distinct determination to become an independent power. Sargon was now king in Nineveh, and the revolt of Merodach brought down his vengeance very speedily on Babylon. A terrible

siege followed. Its duration of ten years showed with what pluck and energy the people of Babylon fought for their independence, and their emancipation from Assyrian control. But all was in vain. The fortunes of Assyria were still in the ascendant, and Babylon fell. The whole world was concerned in this crisis. It was a death-struggle between two rival powers, and all held their breath. Isaiah shows with what deep interest Hezekiah and all Jerusalem watched the progress of this siege: and when the news of the capitulation of Babylon came, we see what alarm and consternation were experienced. The hope of Judah, at this time, was that Babylon would overcome Assyria, or at least greatly weaken her. Not thus, however, was the divine purpose of protecting Jerusalem to evolve itself. The apparent linking of the hope of God's people with the success of Babylon was a mistake. It led to disappointment. In every age the issues of the world have to be fought out, while the Church remains neutral to all temporary questions, concerned only in the interests of truth and righteousness. Elam and Media were then in alliance with Nineveh as against Babylon; the latter power had not yet felt its own power. The cradle of a coming empire was still an insignificant kingdom. Jerusalem had miscalculated the course of events; and the cry, "Babylon is fallen!" caused grief. Other feelings were to be awakened in future days by a message like this: for then the leviathan power of Babylon would have been recognised as Judah's greatest and bitterest enemy. But not yet was this so. Hence it was only natural that when King Merodach sent an embassy in the year 710 B.C., to congratulate King Hezekiah on his recovery from severe sickness, and to negotiate an alliance, a favourable audience was given. The prophet, however, viewed things differently.

For while, doubtless, rejoicing in Nineveh being held in check by Babylon, he could not favour any negotiations with this power. Already he had condemned two great alliances that had been favoured by the leaders of his nation—the Assyrian and the Egyptian alliances: now, in pursuance of his consistent clearly defined policy, he condemns the conduct of King Hezekiah in the matter of this proposed Babylonian alliance. So far we can follow the course of prophecy clearly: and can understand how in 710 B.C. Isaiah found fault with the action of Hezekiah. But immediately after these words of condemnation, the prophet enters upon a remarkable declaration of a day when Babylon shall carry Jerusalem into captivity. Here there is a divine forecasting of history: for as is here foretold, so it fell out. The only difficulty that suggests itself is on the question of time. We have seen that Hezekiah's sickness and the reception of the ambassadors can be dated: but the placing of the prophecy about the Babylonian captivity so late in the Authorised Version may indicate that it was uttered in Isaiah's later years, among his last words. If so, it has been tacked on (most appropriately indeed) to an event that happened much earlier: and this by an editor probably. The alliance with Babylon, however, being so strongly condemned by the prophet, and the folly of showing the treasures of Jerusalem to these foreigners being so manifest, these circumstances may very well have afforded the prophet, then and there, at this early date, an opportunity for warning Hezekiah that he was playing into the hands of a power that would one day be the ruin of Jerusalem. Not many signs to human eye existed that Babylon would yet overthrow Assyria: though a divinely-opened eye like that of Isaiah, and a mind influenced by the Holy Spirit as his

was, could not fail to see in the successful resistance offered to Sargon that a day of greatness was in store for Babylon. That day he declares: one of its terrible consequences he foresees.

And this brings us to what must have been one of the latest of Isaiah's prophecies, or, as many think, a prophecy delivered by a later prophet in the exile. This is the burden or oracle concerning the coming overthrow of Babylon, which occupies the xiii. and xiv. chapters of the book. In the remarkable deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib, the prophet saw a type of the complete overthrow of all the enemies of God's people. He sees a day of the Lord coming, in which the heathen powers shall be punished for their proud boasting against the Lord and His Anointed. Specially among these enemies the prophet singles out Babylon for retribution: and his attitude is now not one of sympathy with this nation as once Isaiah's was, but of enmity. This circumstance of changed attitude, of itself shows how much later this prophecy must be than the first in this section, on which we have commented. The drama of history has advanced many stages, and a new power is seen rising on the political horizon. Babylon's time of triumph had come and is soon to go. Nineveh had ceased to be. Great movements were in progress among the wild Scythian tribes of the North. Media was beginning to consolidate her power.

The very fact of our prophet speaking of Media and not of Persia may show the early date of the prophecy: for about the time Isaiah lived Deiokes was establishing his authority in Ecbatana. Cyrus, however, was really a branch of the Median power, and his first generals were all Medians who had revolted from Astyages, the last Median king

(559 B.C.). Hence the Persian Empire may here be called Median.

In this power our prophet sees the rod destined to punish Babylon : and he is assured of Judah's perfect deliverance. It must have been the deepest grief to him to ponder upon those words of Isaiah's about the treasures of Jerusalem being carried away to Babylon. His firm trust in Jehovah and His covenant ; his hope for the remnant who would perpetuate Jehovah's Name and glory in purer conditions, prepared him for receiving the divine assurance that Babylon would also be overthrown. In clear words the cessation of captivity, and restoration, are foretold. Then is sung the song of triumph over this most glorious event, already realised as an accomplished fact in the prophet's sanguine faith.

How far away, however, was this from Isaiah's time ! Nearly a century and a half had yet to run its course (700-539 B.C.), for it was not till this latter year that the great Cyrus, himself of Media, conquered Babylon, and founded on its ruins another World-Empire, even that of Persia. Long ere this Isaiah's life-work had closed : other prophets and other kings had appeared to carry out his programme : and with their eyes they saw what he had foreseen by faith, the actual accomplishment of his great prophetic principle grasped by faith the divine overthrow of every heathen power. Babylon then fell to rise no more. From Babylon was cut off name and remnant : it became, and remains to this day, a possession for the porcupine and pools of water. Thus completely was it swept with the besom of destruction in fulfilment of the Word of the Lord of Hosts, spoken by the prophet. In 606 B.C. the city of Nineveh was rased to the ground : in 539 B.C. Babylon

shared a similar fate. Assyrians conquer the Syrians: Medians overthrow the Assyrians: while finally the Babylonian power gives way to the Persians, who had succeeded to that of Media. Thus the heathen powers perish before the Lord, and the fulness of the times was brought nearer for the revelation of the divine kingdom.

PART XIII.

(Pp. 86-94.)

SONGS OF TRIUMPH, THE VINDICATION OF JEHOVAH AND THE MESSIANIC KING.

In this section we have several very striking prophecies, which we think may be appropriately called Songs of triumph. They all manifestly concern themselves with a great national victory, such as the overthrow and checkmate of Sennacherib. In these last years of his life, in the death-year of Hezekiah or thereabouts, some great outburst of joyful prophetic activity must have occurred. This had been the supreme moment of Isaiah's life. His words had been so wonderfully fulfilled: man's extremity had once again proved God's opportunity. In some measure divine retribution had overtaken Assyria, but in fuller measure it was yet to fall; hence the Woe here pronounced. The course of Assyria was that of a treacherous dealer—no confidence whatever could be reposed in this people. They were born to spoil, and the moment they ceased spoiling they would be spoiled in turn. "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." The prophet bitterly complains that Sennacherib was not satisfied with the gifts of Hezekiah, but had broken the covenant. And yet this treachery

brought upon him its certain result. For the Lord ariseth to judgment, and a swift work He makes in the earth, Jehovah is the strength of his people. Against the citadel every human force strikes in vain. The purposes and plans of men are only chaff and stubble to be blown away, or burned by the fire, when they stand in the way of Almighty God.

This sense of the divine fire burning up the dross is accompanied immediately with a sense of the purifying efficacy of this same fire. The enemies of Jehovah shall be consumed, as with the breath of His mouth, but what of His professing friends? Judgment doubtless must begin at the House of God. If Jehovah, who is All-Holy, is to dwell in Jerusalem; if the fire of His holiness is to burn on her hearth, to make this city as a true Ariel,—then surely must the people be holy too. The earthly Jerusalem, which has been so signally delivered from outward enemies, should now be emancipated from the more insidious inward enemies, that prey upon the nation's very life. Hence the eternal obligations of morality are declared to be a people's strongest defence, and best guarantee of permanence. Would Jerusalem dwell secure in the high citadel with strong fortification, beyond the reach of famine: would she see her king in glorious beauty, and have her territory far spreading as in the days of David and Solomon, then, both individually and nationally, she should be supremely devoted to a true, honest, and pure life. That this could be brought about by a vision of God, as an All-Holy One, even a consuming fire, the prophet was convinced. This had been so in Isaiah's experience. That it was not brought about, was only owing to the blindness of men, and their unwillingness to see God. Hence, what was a declaration of the state of a reformed Jerusalem, becomes a prophecy

of the new Jerusalem, that shall come down from heaven, and into which there shall in nowise enter anything that "is unclean, or that worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie." There truly shall we see the All-Glorious King: there shall we become subjects of a universal kingdom. Till then our human bests will be but approximations to the divinely perfect.

The deliverance of Jerusalem is described. Her moments of crisis are shown. The prophet tells us how men mused on the time of terror, through which they had so lately passed. The city had been surrounded. The towers were in danger. The ambassadors were arranging terms. The treasurers were even already counting out the money to buy off the cruel enemy. But God intervened. Then Jerusalem again became a quiet habitation—no cord was broken, no stake removed. Once more the ceremonies of the temple worship proceed. No human arm wrought this: no army—no navy accomplished this. The Lord alone, His people's all and in all, effected the deliverance. "God is in the midst of her: the heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted. The Lord of Hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge. God is our refuge and strength: a very present help in trouble."

These words occur in a psalm most probably composed at this time, and therefore inserted in the Text.

Two ideas are always closely associated in Scripture—the overthrow of the wicked and the vindication of the righteous. About the latter the prophet has been speaking: about the former he gives his next utterance. The divine supremacy is to him an unquestioned fact. But what a sight do the kingdoms of the world present with all their wars of ambition and self-aggrandisement! What desolation, and

what mourning everywhere! And wherefore? Only because men have defied the Most High, and broken His law. Their plan has not been His: and as He carries out His, theirs is turned upside down. Confusion shall then seize upon kings and princes: even the sun and moon shall be confounded. In powerful prophetic language the accompaniments of the day of the Lord are thus set forth: the whole passage reminds us of the words of the prophet Joel, quoted at Pentecost by the Apostle Peter. It was "to be the day of the Lord's vengeance: the year of recompence in the controversy of Zion."

More particularly Edom, the hereditary enemy of Jerusalem, is singled out, and the vindication of Jehovah's Name is seen in the complete overthrow of this hostile people. The mind of God concerning Edom is now fully declared.

And just as there are green and beautiful spots in the wildernesses of earth, so amid the hours of human weariness are there moments of joyful confidence in a living God, who will yet right the wrong, and vindicate His own Name. There is a law of alternation in human experience—an alternation of hope and fear, joy and sorrow. Oasis-like, scattered through words of doom pronounced upon heathen nations, are to be found Isaiah's expressions of entire restfulness in God, and his glowing descriptions of a true Messianic kingdom. Though the first of these here given, may have been composed on the occasion of Hezekiah's accession, yet, by placing it in close connection with those that follow, we can trace the development of the idea of a Messianic king.

We have already considered several prophetic pieces, which are closely associated with the deliverance already wrought for Jerusalem. The others now before us show

how the prophet under divine guidance, had been led to the forecasting of an ideal king, ruling over an ideal kingdom—a true, even a divine king of men, with a perfect kingdom, with foundations of righteousness, and bulwarks of holiness and salvation. The disappointments of hope attending the life and reign of Hezekiah would only have intensified Isaiah's longing for a perfect king, in whose case the Four Names, expressive of a fourfold perfection of character, might be fully realised. And this became to his followers a Messianic Hope, in close connection with which was developed the plan of Salvation. We are not concerned with how much, or how little of this plan Isaiah or his successors understood: we are only concerned with the historical outcome. Our salvation depends on Him who has come, not on the views of prophets about Him who was to come. The meaning of the Spirit is always fuller than any apprehension of it at any time by any prophet, and grander than any expression of it.

The prophet boldly declared, with glowing faith, and in darkest days, that there would come forth from the withered, shrivelled up, disappointing stock of Jesse—*i.e.*, David's House, a branch that would bear worthy fruit indeed. The language here used can find no full realisation in mere man. The king with the Four Names is described; these Four Names are here commented upon with an ideal fulness of detail: and the blessings to be enjoyed under the rule of such a prince are set forth as about to be shared, not by man only, but by universal Nature. Not only would Ephraim and Judah once more dwell in amity around this Branch out of the stump of Jesse: but it would be an Ensign for all nations to rally round. The Ten Tribes, who had departed from Judah's sceptre, and had suffered so

severely in Assyria, are to be restored. The latter glory of David's House is to surpass its former glory. Jerusalem is to be a redeemed and purified city, with a king reigning there in righteousness, with princes ruling in justice. There would then be seen a moral and spiritual condition, which would be a true restoration—all old things passing away, and all things becoming new. This would indeed be a new Jerusalem like that which shall descend from heaven—that holy city prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Who would not dwell there? And thus the prophet's eye sees with rejoicing a great procession of restored ones wending their way to the City of David : and as they move along he sees wilderness and solitary place alike sharing their gladness. Such an event would assuredly cause the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. What a vision is this of a reunited people, and of a renovated earth, that the prophet sees! No weak hands ; no feeble knees ! No blind eyes ; no deaf ears ! Nothing to hurt in all God's Holy Mountain—the earth filled with the knowledge of God ! Oh, how the human spirit longs for such a day. But just such a day, the world's true golden age, have all God's prophets promised to our race, ever since prophecy began. Just such a day has Christ, the true Messiah guaranteed to us by His work. He is the true King, the “great man that has proved Himself an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the storm.” Such a day St John saw in the visions of Patmos. And this day foretold by prophets, sung of by psalmists, and seen by evangelists, draweth ever nigh, when there shall be a “new heaven, and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.” As the prophet here so fully shows, that will be a true restoration of all things, even as Malachi foretold. Not in any merely

verbal or literary sense, but in truth, and with transcendent spiritual fulness that day will come: and then Isaiah, among the sowers, and those who are privileged to reap, shall rejoice together.

In the glowing song of the restored people, there is a retrospect of the past, as the psalmist remembers the great deliverances already wrought for Judah. His praise is of God who had so manifestly become his Salvation: and he is not content with expressing his own confidence in Jehovah: he does much more, for he calls upon all the people to make known the greatness and the glory of the Holy One of Israel—of that One who dwelleth in Zion.

PART XIV.

(Pp. 95-102.)

A LATER PROPHECY CONCERNING A GREAT DIVINE INTERPOSITION (Ch. xxiv.-xxvii.).

The death-years of Uzziah and Ahaz had been signally connected with special manifestations of the prophetic spirit on Isaiah's part, and it has been suggested that the death-year of Hezekiah might furnish another such occasion. But the prophet was now an old man: his work for God, and his generation was about done. It is not known how long he lived after the accession of the idolatrous Manasseh. Hence, apart from other considerations, it would be rather too much to expect that the whole cycle of restoration-prophecy (ch. xl.-lxvi.) was composed about this time by him. But evidence of an internal kind, gathered from the literary style, historical standpoint, and references of these

chapters lead to the conclusion that they are written by other hands, and at a later period. In the same way, ch. xxiv.-xxvii., which form by themselves a complete prophecy, and are before us in this part, have a literary style of their own, and many things about them that have compelled critics to assign them to a very much later date than that of Isaiah.

It must be clearly understood that such a decision is not adopted by believing men on the ground of any difficulty they may have about the prophetic power of foretelling the future: for of this power, divinely given to the prophets, and abundantly conferred on Isaiah, we have ample evidence. But a careful study of the point of view, and historical condition of things in which these chapters must have been given, preclude our accepting them as Isaiah's. They speak to a people in captivity: they call to their remembrance the ruins of the beautiful house in which their fathers worshipped God: and they proclaim comfort, inasmuch as this captivity was soon to end. No gain is derived by a belief that would place Isaiah in a position higher than his own, which is already of the highest, or encourage hero-worship. For, after all, it is the message, not the name or person of the individual messenger, with which Inspiration, and inspired truth concern themselves. The naming of books in the Old Testament was in former days largely a matter of uncritical tradition, depending on the imperfect materials for information lying to hand. It should, therefore, be continually borne in mind, that it does not matter much who is named as the messenger, but very much more what the message is. We should think not so much of the channel by which, or the person by whom, but much more of the Source, from whom the Word came. It may be a

matter of regret, that we do not know who wrote the cycle of restoration-prophecy, or that any doubt should exist as to the authorship of any sections of prophecy: but, after all, this is only a matter of sentiment. That the second portion is more brilliant than the first, is open to question. This view may have arisen from the distinctive Messianic interpretation given to it, at the expense of its first and primary historic application to the events of the Return from Exile. The brilliancy and power of Isaiah stand beyond a doubt, even though he never wrote this second part. But it is easy to see how the belief in the Isaianic authorship of these chapters grew up. They are so thoroughly Isaianic in spirit: they so fully carry out, and complete the programme of the teaching of that great prophet. He who had foretold the deliverance of Jerusalem from Assyria, would he not also foretell the deliverance of Jerusalem from Babylon? A promise of restoration, and a new Jerusalem with a purified remnant, was a germinal idea of Isaiah. But it never was the method of God to place His servants in conditions as yet far from being realised, and foretell deliverance from a danger not yet near. Considerations like these show us, however, the manner in which the tradition of the Isaianic authorship of the second portion was formed, and also the improbability of that tradition, plausible though it may appear.

Looking now at the three chapters before us (xxiv.-xxvii.) the grandeur of the faith inculcated by Isaiah, and the wide outlook upon the nations taught by this prophet to his disciples, is clearly seen. Thus, whether late or early, they must have been written by one truly in touch with this master mind. Not any one particular nation now, but all nations, must hear Jehovah. Not upon one mighty

empire, but upon every kingdom, does the sword fall: that sword of vengeance is satiated with blood. The scene is awful in the extreme. But just in this way does God in every age work His sovereign will. He plants "His footstep on the sea, and rides upon the storm." Thebes, Nineveh, Tyre, Babylon—all to be ruined! The habitations of kings and mighty emperors are now the possession of pelicans and porcupines. Every age has its own empire—its own hero: how seldom is God alone honoured! And see the wrecks of human glory all along the shore of time. We have mentioned four mighty wrecks: to them may be added Persia, Macedonia, Antioch, Rome—these with their Cyrus, their Alexander, their Seleucidae, their Cæsars—all gone! To day Germany, Great Britain, the United States, and so on, remain. Will they learn wisdom, and shape their counsels according to that righteousness that alone exalteth a nation, or shall they too perish in the awful avalanche that destroys the nations who obey not God?

The prophet has seen the wonderful works of God, as great cities had been made heaps, even strongly fortified towns a ruin. God had proved Himself His people's stronghold. Perhaps some very recent intervention on their behalf is before his mind. He bursts out into a hymn of sublime confidence in Jehovah, and calls upon all to trust in God only. But he is manifestly distressed at the prevailing unbelief. Men are so blind and wilful: they see not God's Hand, the prophet complains, even though it is so manifestly stretched out. There is need for prayer, and patience, and hope: for no great results have yet been accomplished by Zion: they have wrought no deliverance in the earth. But there is to be a resurrec-

tion of a nation so dead, even as Ezekiel saw in his vision in the valley of dry bones. This is the prophetic hope. There shall be, he clearly foretells, a gathering of the people from all the regions into which they have been carried captive. The Lord shall come out of His place, and punish Egypt and Babylon: He will show Himself the keeper and protector of His own chosen vineyard. But a people who would enjoy such protection must be a purified people: idolatry in every shape and form must cease out of the land. Then would come in fullest glory the day of the Lord's deliverance. The people, restored and purified, would then celebrate once more the Feast of Tabernacles with great joy—a joy even greater than that which characterised its first establishment at the Exodus. The festive procession would again carry forth the water from the Pool of Siloam in golden basins to the courts of the Temple, amid the shouts of a people deeply conscious of deliverance once more achieved. The inhabitant of Zion would make his boast alone in Jehovah, the source of every victory, and the God of Salvation.

DIVISION III.

PART I.

THE RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS OF ISAIAH.

A PROPHECY contains the application of the religious principles, held by a prophet, to the conditions of the time in which he lived. These principles are presented in the clothing of the practical application; they were the possession of the prophet, perhaps more or less systematised by himself, but certainly not stated in any abstract or theological manner by themselves. Their value to him was in this, that they were living principles, capable of application, and easily understood. Now Isaiah was the man he was, because of his clear apprehension of certain outstanding conceptions of God, and Providence, and because of his forcible expression of them. But it is not easy to state them in a form that would be clearly his, and not partly ours; for interpreting his statements in the light of fuller revelation, we are apt to see more in them than he actually purposed to express.

An attempt is here made to gather together in brief space the leading religious conceptions of Isaiah.

And first of all, **as to God.** Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, is the term under which the prophet speaks of God. The first term tells of a God in relation to a people: the second speaks of a universal divine supremacy. It was as a supreme King on a heavenly throne, ruling over all, that Isaiah first thought of God. But this King had not merely the natural

attributes of power and wisdom—His glory not only filled the earth ; but He had moral attributes. He was supreme holiness and grace. His majesty filled the heavens. He was far above and beyond man in His divine perfections, but yet a God who could come into touch with a purified people, and speak to them. Essentially a God of righteousness, viewed in its ethical fulness, He was a God ever making for righteousness by the workings of His providence. Nor did He concern Himself with one people alone, or exclusively. He was no tribal deity only, as Chemosh in Moab was : no national appropriation, as Asshur was to Nineveh. This God speaks to all nations, and is supremely interested in them ; because He purposes the vindication of righteousness, the establishment of a righteous kingdom. The divine relationship to His people is not conceived in any arbitrary or indiscriminate way. Jerusalem, with her covenant, her sacrifices, and her temple, was apt to regard the divine relationship as a fixed thing, whatever might be the conditions of life and conduct. Not so taught Isaiah. He valued much these outward guarantees of spiritual realities : but he valued much more the spiritual realities themselves.

Hence God is conceived as having a **Purpose**. And this purpose the Zeal of Jehovah performs. Faith in this purpose marks Isaiah. To him Jerusalem and her temple may be the centre of religion, provided Jerusalem be a pure people. But in full view of a partial repentance, or a repentance by only a part of the people, the prophet grasps the idea of a chosen people, a remnant, who should be saved as the result of the spirit of burning, and the spirit of justice. The divine Purpose then is not so much to have a people, as to have a people conformed to the divine image. As the author

of salvation, God works only on the lines of righteousness, and for those who love and practise righteousness.

Repentance was taught as that which must always come before **Forgiveness**. Repentance meant much to Isaiah: it meant the beginning of a life according to God. Already spiritual and personal qualifications, rather than outward and national privileges, were being emphasised. A doctrine of a **Church** was evolving itself: not all being Israel who are of Israel: a church, a visible body indeed, but distinct from the political whole, in which it exists. Isaiah had not advanced, however, as far as Jeremiah on this point: for by the time of Jeremiah, much of what Isaiah depended on was being broken up. The doctrine of the Remnant—of a purged few, leads the way. The worth of individuality begins to appear. Faith and character, rather than birth and location, are being seen to be the conditions of membership in a true Jerusalem. Some of the **notes** of the Church are also declared. It is a tenth, a divine vineyard, a witnessing body, a remnant.

The prophet's religious conception here was wrought out in an experience through which he himself had passed. He himself had as a man, before receiving his commission as a prophet, experienced the crisis of all that is involved in the **Vision of God**. He had himself come into personal relationship with a living God, and this by the way of a divine revelation and a genuine repentance. He had got beyond all local, national, and ceremonial rites into the fellowship of the Heavenlies. Thus the doctrine of **Sacrifice** as held by the prophet, becomes clear. To him it was an aid only, where true faith already existed: in itself it was void of value. The individual man, by seeing God and abandoning sin, must be touched by God: this is repentance, and

forgiveness. A doctrine of **Grace** comes in here: for the prophet believed that God would, and did touch man, forgiving him all his iniquity. Salvation here is wholly of God. God Himself makes the **Atonement** by bringing His divine sufficiency to meet human need. Human merit is excluded in the confession of undoneness, and God Himself intervenes. This was the necessity of the position to Isaiah. How it has been fully met the New Testament shows.

The principle of **Immanuel** as speaking of a God with man, not yet fully grasped in the sense of the Incarnation, involves a doctrine of **Conscience**: just as the principle of the remnant carries with it the doctrine of human responsibility, and the worth of individuality. The individual for himself, and without any human intermediary, may see and hear God: he ought to obey the heavenly vision, and can be made able so to do. The voice divine may become a voice within, an individual guide to action, saying, "This is the way." God, who thus is supremely far off by His Holiness, may become very near by His Grace: "if we abide faithful, He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself."

A **righteous life** is inculcated, and in the doctrine of Immanuel, shown to be possible. God with man, and man with God—this holy alliance will overcome sin in the members, and tread down temptation under foot. The whole life-struggle of Isaiah gathered round the necessity of human life being in alliance with God. He dealt mainly with the State: but what he saw to be true here was felt soon to be true in every relation. The whole course of providence with its judgments is one of chastisement to bring about righteousness, to emphasise its necessity. But this involves the doctrine of **punishment**. A divine vindication, or a vindication of righteousness, is a complete

thing ; it is both recompence and vengeance—recompence to the pure worshipper of Jehovah, vengeance against the impure worshippers of false gods. That this divine vindication might come speedily, and on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, was Isaiah's hope : that it must come finally, was his certain assurance—somewhere, and at some time. But Isaiah saw hope after hope disappointed : his hopes were often cast down to the dust ; and yet his belief in a coming day of the Lord wavered not. His last words were as full of this day as his earliest prophecies : but they are more and more disentangling themselves from local circumstances. So that, as his expectation of a speedy day of the Lord coming was disappointed, or only partially fulfilled, his faith in the ultimate triumph of righteousness became purer and stronger. And in this faith lies the germ of a doctrine of **Immortality**, with a **Future life** of glory : in eternity only can there be victory over every human limitation, over despair, and death itself. Our prophet sings and taught his followers to sing about restoration, about a resurrection of hope, nay, even about a resurrection of the dead bodies of God's people. And though these latter words may refer only to national restoration, as in Ezekiel's vision, there is involved in them a hope of final resurrection.

Every partial vindication of the divine righteousness is a pledge of its perfect vindication ; every day of the Lord against Assyria or Edom is a pledge of the last great day of the Lord against every enemy of truth and righteousness : when all idols shall be destroyed, and every idol worshipper shall hide himself ashamed, and God alone shall be exalted in that day.

PART II.

A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE (745-539 B.C.).

- 745. Tilgath-Pileser or Pul, king of Assyria.
- 742-740. Death of Uzziah, and consecration of Isaiah.
- 738. Tribute paid by Menahem, king of Israel, to Assyria.
- 736. Ahaz ascends the throne of Jerusalem.
- 734. Campaign against Philistia. Defeat of Pekah. Tribute of Ahaz to Assyria.
- 732. Capture of Damascus, and death of Rezin.
- 731. Merodach-Baladan does homage to Assyria.
- 728. Death of Pekah. Appointment of Hoshea as last king of Israel.
- 727-722. Reign of Shalmaneser IV., King of Assyria.
- 724-722. Siege and capture of Samaria begun by Shalmaneser, finished by Sargon.
- 722. Hezekiah succeeds Ahaz.
- 722-705. Reign of Sargon, in Nineveh.
- 720. Battle of Raphia, in which Shabak (So), king of Egypt, was defeated.
- 717. Capture of Carchemish by Sargon.
- 715. Foreign peoples brought into Samaria.
- 711. Ashdod taken after a siege of three years. Hezekiah's reception of embassy from Babylon.
- 710. Fall of Babylon. Invasion of Judah by Assyria.
- 707. Sargon builds Dur-Sarrukin, and palaces in Nineveh.
- 705. Death of Sargon. Accession of Sennacherib.
- 701. Campaign against Judah and Egypt. Siege of Jerusalem. Defeat of Egypt at El-Tekeh.
- 693. Death of Hezekiah. Manasseh ascends the throne.
- 681. Death of Sennacherib. Esar-Haddon succeeds.
- 676. Manasseh pays tribute to Assyria.
- 672. Esar-Haddon conquers Egypt.
- 662. Destruction of Thebes. Noph—*i.e.*, Memphis, had fallen earlier (680?).
- 610. Defeat of Jerusalem at Megiddo by Egypt.
- 607. Fall of Nineveh.
- 606. Defeat of Egypt at Carchemish.
- 588. Jerusalem carried into captivity.
- 585-572. Overthrow of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar.
- 559. Rise of Persia, and fall of Media (710-559).
- 539. Destruction of Babylon.

PART III.

GLOSSARY OF NAMES AND NOTES.

(Arranged as they occur in the text.)

(P. II.)

Isaiah, the son of Amos : born about 765 : begins his ministry 742 or 740 : dies early in Manasseh's reign, say 693, aged seventy-two, probably by martyrdom. Lineage unknown, but of noble, perhaps royal, parentage.

Judah and **Jerusalem**, the sphere of Isaiah's ministry. Isaiah confined himself to the capital, while his contemporary, Micah, laboured in the provinces. Both prophets dwelt on the latter-day glory. Hosea was the last prophet sent with a divine message to Ephraim, or the kingdom of the Ten Tribes.

Uzziah, called also **Azariah**, reigned in Jerusalem, 810 to 758—*i.e.*, fifty-two years. During this period great prosperity was enjoyed : but in 758 an act of guilty interference with the Temple worship brought condign punishment. He lived in a separate house till his death in 742.

Jotham became regent in 758, when his father was laid aside : assumed full power in 742, and died in 736. Not specially distinguished. He was regent for sixteen years, and king for six.

Ahaz reigned from 736 to 722. He formed an alliance with Assyria, and introduced idolatrous customs into Judah. His full name was **Jehoahaz**, but his prefix is significantly discarded by the sacred historian, as this king would not make Jehovah his help. He reigned about sixteen years. His son **Hezekiah** was co-regent from 726 to 722.

Hezekiah reigned from 722 to 693—*i.e.*, twenty-nine years. A pupil of Isaiah, who entertained highest hopes on his accession. His alliance with Egypt, and reception of the Babylonian embassy grieved the prophet. But his zeal for a pure worship was praiseworthy.

Eloth, or **Elath**, a seaport on the Gulph of Akabah, important in connection with the Red Sea trade, and especially with the gold mines of Ophir.

Zechariah, a prophet in Uzziah's reign, who has left no prophetic writings, unless bound up with those of the later prophet of this name.

The Philistines, formerly inhabiting the centre of Palestine, but driven towards the coast by the Children of Israel. They were a powerful tribe, and a continual source of trouble to Judah : and in Gath, Ashdod, Ashkelon had strongly fortified towns. Philistia lay right on

(Pp. 12-28.)

the highway between the rival powers of Assyria and Egypt, then contending for supremacy. It is west and south-west of Judah.

Gur-Baal, a town on the southern border of Judah, occupied by rabians.

Mehunim, an Arabian tribe, probably on south of Judah = Maon.

Ammon, an idolatrous tribe north-east from Judah, north of Moab.

The Lowland, or **Shephelah**, a geographical term for the low country west of Jerusalem, as **Negeb** is for the south country.

Ophel, a strongly fortified hill on the south-eastern side of Jerusalem, with a tower.

City of David, the part of Jerusalem which had the Royal Residence and the sepulchres of the kings: built on Mount Zion, and distinct from Mount Moriah, on which the Temple stood.

House of Jacob, used as a designation of Judah, while Ephraim is described as Israel. The distinction of Israel and Judah should be observed in studying the prophets before the Exile.

Lebanon, a magnificent range of mountains in the north of Palestine.

Bashan, a country known for its mountains; and very fertile; beyond the Jordan. (Deut. xxxii. 14; Ps. lxxviii. 15.)

Tarshish ships—*i.e.*, merchant vessels generally. The class is named from a particular. Ships engaged in trade with Tarshish or Tartessus, on the south coast of Spain, were the most important; hence even those trading on the Red Sea were named as above.

Samaria. The country and capital town of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, or Northern kingdom. Established as a seat of a dynasty in 972 by Jeroboam, who revolted from Judah, and made Israel to sin. Carried into captivity in 722, after lasting as an independent kingdom 250 years.

Rezin, last king of Syria, with his capital in Damascus. This kingdom was overthrown by Assyria in 732. Syria is also Aram, whence Aramaic as the term for the *lingua franca* of the country of Palestine.

Manasseh and **Ephraim**, the two leading tribes of the Ten, that revolted from Judah. Internecine strife among the Tribes had been the bane of their history.

Valley of the Sons of Hinnom—in N. T. = Gehenna. This beautiful valley below Jerusalem had been desecrated by the cruel rites of the worship of Moloch. A heated brazen urn received children, who then fell into a burning caldron. Hinnom in Hebrew means groaning.

King of Syria = Rezin.

Tilgath-Pileser, or Pul, a great military leader who raised the Empire of Assyria to the rank of a first-rate power, and made it felt in all directions. He reigned from 745 to 727, being the contemporary of Jotham and Ahaz.

(Pp. 28-37.)

Kir, a province of Assyria—viz., Georgia, on the north-east of Armenia.

Urijah, a priest in Jerusalem guilty of obsequious obedience to Ahaz.

Hoshea, Israel's last king, 729 to 722. He rebelled against Assyria, and entered into negotiations with So, or Shabak, king of Egypt, Assyria's rival : hence was punished by captivity.

Shalmaneser succeeded Tilgath-Pileser, and reigned five years, 727 to 722. He began the siege of Samaria, which Sargon (722-705) his great successor, completed.

So, or, fully, **Shabak**, was a powerful Egyptian king. His negotiation with Hoshea brought down upon himself the anger of Assyria. At Raphia, in 720, Sargon defeated him. He was succeeded by Shabataka, who was followed by Tirhakah, a distinguished sovereign, who eagerly sought an alliance with Hezekiah. In 662, during this king's reign, Thebes fell before Assyria, and Egypt was much crippled as Isaiah foretold she would be. See also Nahum's prophecy (iii. 8).

The South, or Negeb, a geographical term for the south country of Judah : distinct from the Shephelah (see above).

Pekah, the son of Remaliah, the last king but one of Samaria, de-throned by Assyria in 729. He was indeed a smoking torch.

Shear-Jashub, **Mahe-Shalal-Hash-Baz**, and **Immanuel**, the names of three young men, two of whom certainly were Isaiah's sons, the third probably : and each name was significant of a specific prophecy delivered by Isaiah to Ahaz. Shear = Remnant. Jashub = Will return.

The Fuller's field, a well-known place on the north of Jerusalem, near the Highway to Samaria, and the Upper or Hezekiah's Pool.

Ben Tabeal, an unknown person, whom it was proposed by Syria and Samaria to place on the throne of Jerusalem. Not a Jew.

The Fly, used for the Egyptian people. Insects were common in Egypt.

The Bee, here used for the Assyrian people. As above, poetic terms.

Shiloah, a spring and pool south-east of Jerusalem, the waters of which trickled slowly but surely. Here it stands as a symbol for the source of Jerusalem's strength, even Jehovah : as the Euphrates is used for Assyria. The Pool of Siloam is the Lower Pool.

Zebulun and Naphtali—i.e., upper and lower Galilee tribes, dwelling on the sea coast, which had once suffered terribly from the Assyrian invasions. (Gen. xlix. 13.) See Matt. iv. 14.

The Way of the Sea—i.e., the region round the Sea of Galilee.

Midian, signally defeated by Gideon. See Judges vi.-viii.

Moab. This country lay due east from Judah, beyond the Dead Sea, and had played an important part in her time. From time to time she had been subdued by Samaria and Judah, but, in her pride, she continu-

(Pp. 37-40.)

ally revolted. Reference is here made to the tribute of sheep and lambs which Jehoram, king of Israel, had imposed on Mesha, the king of Moab. (2 Kings iii. 4 ; xiv. 7.) The prophet here combines several prophetic oracles, and works them up as a prelude to the final message he is instructed to deliver. A most complete and graphic knowledge of Moab is shown. Sela was a strong town. Others are mentioned with their peculiarities of situation, or cultivation. There appear to have been three places called **Eglath**, of which Eglaim is the dual, and means the two Eglaths : while Eglath-Shelishyah means Eglath the third. Bajith = house or temple. Arnon is a boundary stream : the water of Dimon. Dimon = Dibon, changed to allow of the paranomasia : Dimon in Hebrew suggesting the word for blood. Chemosh was the tutelary deity of Moab. She is counselled to submit to Judah : but this counsel being rejected, her destruction is foretold. The vine of Sibmah was famous : its culture was widely extended, even to Jazer in the north, and the desert in the east. So Engedi. See Song of Sol. i. 14.

Dumah, used by Isaiah as corresponding to the Hebrew for silence, but here the name for **Edom**, shortened from **Idumæa**. This is the territory of the children of Esau round Mount Seir, and lies due south from Moab. Edom's doom is not now pronounced : but the destruction of her people, and Bozrah, her chief town, is afterwards set forth (see page 89). It is referred to in Isaiah lxiii. also.

Arabia, lying south of Judah, the land of Steppes, inhabited by numerous nomadic tribes, as Dedan, Tema, Kedar. Such tribes suffered from the wave of Assyrian invasion. The Hebrew word for *evening* is similar to the name of the country here.

Aroer. There were several towns of the name, one in South Palestine, and two in the district east of the Jordan. It is to this district that reference is here made. One Aroer is in the tribe of Gad ; the other in that of Reuben. These Tribes respectively occupied the lands of the Amorites and Ammonites.

Valley of Rephaim, a fertile plain on south of Jerusalem.

Astartes, or **Asherim**, or **Ashteroth**. Astarte was a Phœnician goddess, whose worship was introduced into Samaria by Ahab chiefly. Being worshipped in groves, Asherah was thus rendered in A. V. Asherim is masculine-plural, and Ashteroth the feminine-plural of Asherah. Adonis is the Greek form of this deity.

Hivites and Amorites. This reading is found in the LXX., and makes the text more clear and graphic. These tribes disappeared before Israel. So should Syria and Samaria disappear before Assyria.

A piece of brass—*i.e.*, Nehushtan. The brazen serpent made by Moses had in itself no efficacy : it was only brass, and should never have been worshipped, as it appears to have been.

(Pp. 42-50.)

The Kidron, a stream north-east of Jerusalem: its valley is also known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat. It flows into the Dead Sea.

The Steps or Dial of Ahaz, a pyramid composed of steps, introduced by Ahaz in connection with astrology. The remarkable phenomenon of the sun's shadow appearing to go up ten steps may have been caused by refraction in a certain state of the atmosphere. Its unusual character made it a sign to weak faith.

Lachish, a Philistine town south-west from Jerusalem, where the Assyrian armies encamped on their march against Egypt.

Sennacherib reigned over Assyria from 705 to 681, and was therefore the contemporary of Hezekiah. In 701 he conquered Egypt at El-Tekeh, but fled from before Jerusalem. Two kings reigned after him in Nineveh, Esar-Haddon, and Asur-Bani-Pal: and 607 saw the fall of the Assyrian Empire before the Median Power.

Millo, a rampart, strongly fortified, on the west of Mount Zion.

Rabshakeh or **Rab-Sak**, the chief cup-bearer, or general staff-officer in the Assyrian service, entrusted with diplomatic business. It is the title of an office, and not the name of a person. The **Tartan** was a supreme military officer, or commander-in-chief, while the **Rab Saris** was the Chief of the Eunuchs, and a confidential officer. Rab=Chief.

Eliakim, became Treasurer or Chief Officer of State under King Hezekiah, in succession to Shebna, whose removal from office Isaiah announced.

Shebna, a foreigner and an upstart. His pro-Egyptian policy marked him out for severe condemnation at the hands of the prophet. He had purchased a burial-place prematurely, thinking that his tenure of office was sure. Here he appears already in a secondary position.

Hamath, at the north border of the Holy Land, a large town on the Orontes, depopulated by the Assyrian in 720. Full of Hittite Inscriptions.

Arpad=Aradus, a town on the coast, now a heap of ruins, near Hamath.

Sepharvaim, or Sipar, a town to the north of Babylon; built on both sides of the Euphrates, and hence in dual form here. Conquered by Sargon. Sixteen miles from Bagdad.

Libnah, a town near Lachish.

Gozan, a river, or a district in Mesopotamia.

Haran, a province in Assyria. Perhaps part of Media.

Rezep, a town beyond the Euphrates, reduced by Assyria. Several places so called.

Eden, a district along the banks of the Euphrates. In Mesopotamia.

Telassar, or Tel-Ashur, a town in Media.

Henah and **Ivah**, Assyrian towns to which Israel was carried captive, near Carchemish.

(Pp. 52-62.)

My hook. Assyrian sculptures show how the custom prevailed in Assyria of taking prisoners away with a hook in the nose.

Nisroch, not identified. Perhaps a modification of Ashur, the god of Nineveh: the *sr* having been taken from a descriptive title, and the *och* being an augmentative. **Asarach** is the form in the LXX.

Esar-Haddon, King in Nineveh, reigned 681 to 668, successor of Sennacherib.

Calno, a strong town = Ctesiphon or Zerghish, south of Babylon, on Tigris.

Carchemish, a place of military importance on the Euphrates, and the capital of the ancient Hittite kingdom. Taken in 717 by Sargon. A decisive battle was fought here between Egypt and Babylon in 606.

Remover of Boundaries, a title assumed by the Assyrian kings. They claimed to be king of kings, and lord paramount or superior. They certainly robbed the nations, like bird-nests.

The Light of Israel, a name of Jehovah, who was represented by the Shekinah glory.

Rock of Oreb, the place of Gideon's signal victory over Midian. (Judges viii.) This victory became in prophecy a type of other and greater deliverances.

Aiath, &c. Here is given a graphic account of an invasion of Judah from the north: and town after town is mentioned in due order. That this refers to an actual invasion of Sargon in 710 seems probable. The later invasion of Sennacherib was from the west by way of Lachish. Although no definite statement is on record as to this invasion, yet the Inscriptions tell us that "Judah and other lands were at the time of the invasion of Philistia speaking treason." The emended reading, "The destroyer is come up from the north," removes an ambiguous clause from the text, and affords a good introduction to what follows. The geographical peculiarities are here marked; and the actions attributed to each place correspond strikingly to their names. In this passage, and in that concerning Moab, this play on words, so characteristic of Isaiah, is abundantly seen.

The Valley of Vision, a name for Jerusalem as the home of prophetic vision.

Elam, a province near Babylon. In Sargon's time, in alliance with Assyria, Kir and Elam fight against Assyria's enemies.

The Forest House, a house of cedars, a royal armoury (1 Kings vii. 2; x. 17).

Lower Pool. The pool of Siloam, in south-east of city.

Ethiopia, addressed here as a land full of insects, of which there are so many in Eastern lands. It corresponds to Cush, or the southern division of Egypt. A powerful Ethiopian king, Piankhi-Mer Amon, had

(Pp. 62-71.)

united Egypt and Ethiopia under one sceptre about 726 : and was succeeded by a line of brave monarchs, who sustained the fame of the Pharaohs. The prophet's message is complimentary. Herodotus describes the Ethiopians as the tallest and finest of men. The **Ho!** does not express woe, but interest, and calls for attention.

Tartan, a supreme military general of Assyria.

Ashdod, a strong fortress of the Philistines, was besieged for about three years by Sargon's generals ; and had to be reduced before Assyria could advance against Egypt. The story of the siege is fully given on the Inscriptions on the wall of Sargon's palace at Khorsabad.

Zoan, a chief town of Lower Egypt, on a branch of the Nile delta—also called **Tanis**. **Hanes**, another important town of Lower Egypt.

The Beasts of the South—*i.e.*, an embassy with caravans carrying gifts, going south, even to Egypt.

The Braggart—*i.e.*, Rahab, the poetic name for Egypt. The inability of Egypt to fulfil her promises is here set forth.

A Funeral Pyre—*i.e.*, Tophet, such as was erected in the valley of Hinnom for Moloch, worshipped as the king of Heaven.

A Cruel Lord, probably the Assyrian king : or Psammetichus (660 to 610), a powerful king of Egypt.

Noph=Memphis, ancient capital of Lower Egypt : capital of Shepherd Kings. Thebes, farther south, its great rival, once a royal residence and a place of importance.

The Nile was the source of Egypt's wealth : anything affecting the former would reduce the latter.

Ir Ha-Heres, the city of destruction, or of the sun—perhaps Heliopolis. But the meaning is obscure. The LXX. read the city of righteousness, and on account of this Onias obtained permission, in 160 B.C., to build a Jewish temple in Egypt, which stood till 72 A.D. : this, however, was not for converted Egypt, but for Jews residing there. The City of the Sun-worship might well be termed the City of Destruction by a worshipper of Jehovah (Jer. xliii. 13). Heliopolis, or On, was near Memphis.

Pillar, or Maçgeba, not yet condemned as idolatrous : old indication of a sacred place.

Ephraim's capital was on a hill, the side of which was covered with vines, and beneath were fat, or fertile, valleys.

Mount Perazim, where a victory was obtained by David over the Philistines. (2 Sam. v. 20.)

Valley of Gibeon, where Joshua obtained a signal triumph over the five kings. (Josh. x. 10.)

Ariel—*i.e.*, Jerusalem : thus poetically described as the Hearth or the

(Pp. 75-91.)

Lion of God—it being both the place where the fire of His holiness burned, and the place where His strength was revealed.

Sodom and **Gomorrha**, signal instances of the divine wrath against sin, referred to here by way of warning. Two cities of the Plain.

Tyre, on a narrow coast land, and adjoining isle. Centre of great maritime enterprise. Besieged by Shalmaneser in 724. Captured by Nebuchadnezzar in 572. Finally overthrown by Alexander the Great, 332.

Tarshish = Tartessus, on south coast of Spain : an important trading town.

Kittim, the isle of Cyprus in the Levant.

The Desert of the Sea, or district of rivers, as Mesopotamia, which means between the seas, is really the country between the great rivers Euphrates and Tigris. Babylon is thus described. Its revolt against Assyria quelled 710, but it fell in 539, and by 60 was indeed a desert.

Media and Elam are here enemies of Babylon, and allies of Assyria. The Medes became an independent power about 710. When Isaiah was prophesying they established themselves in Ecbatana, and this must have been known in Jerusalem. That there was a future before the Medes the prophet saw. The Median Empire lasted from 710 to 559, when Cyrus founded the Persian Power : but his first generals were Medes. In the text we have Sargon's address to **Media** and Elam.

Merodach-Baladan, a powerful king of Babylon, who rebelled against Assyria, and stood a siege for ten years, thus forecasting Babylon's independence. He was dethroned by Sargon, but again established himself on that king's death in 705. Nineveh fell before Babylon in 609 to 607, and Nebuchadnezzar had a brilliant reign.

Merodach is a title of one of the gods of Babylon. The Medes were being stirred up about this time against Babylon.

The Mount of Congregation, a mythical dwelling-place of the gods, the Olympus of Assyria, on the hills of Aralu, at the supposed entrance to the lower world, Sheol or Hades.

Bozrah, the capital of Edom, and the scene of Jehovah's vengeance upon his enemies.

Isles of the Sea, or coastlands of the countries washed by the sea.

Carmel, a well-known mountain, etymologically a fruitful place, on the coast of Palestine, north of Cæsarea.

Sharon, a beautiful and fertile plain, extending from Joppa to Cæsarea.

The River—*i.e.*, the Euphrates.

The Stock of Jesse = David's house and family, out of which a true king would yet arise.

(P. 93.)

Egypt or Matzor. There are two Egypts, hence the dual form Mitzraim. Pathros or Thebaid, with Thebes for its capital, is Upper Egypt : while the northern part, including the Delta, with Memphis for its capital, is Lower Egypt (see p. 51.) Cush or Ethiopia = Nubia, was at one time united with Egypt.

Shinar, a province of Babylon or South Babylonia.

The Tongue of Egypt. As the Red Sea was smitten in the day of Exodus : so again any sea or stream of Egypt that stands in the way of the people of God shall be smitten.

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